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THE

WORKS

OF

JOHN LOCKE.

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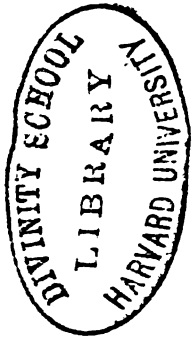

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THE

REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,

AS

DELIVERED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

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THE

PREFACE.

THE little satisfaction and consistency that is to be found in most of the systems of divinity I have met with, made me betake myself to the sole reading of the Scriptures (to which they all appeal) for the understanding the Christian Religion. What from thence, by an attentive and unbiassed search, I have received, Reader, I here deliver to thee. If by this my labour thou receivest any light, or confirmation in the truth, join with me in thanks to the Father of lights, for his condescension to our understandings. If, upon a fair and unprejudiced examination, thou findest I have mistaken the sense and tenor of the Gospel, I beseech thee, as a true Christian, in the spirit of the Gospel, (which is that of charity) and in the words of sobriety, set me right, in the doctrine of salvation.

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THE

REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,

AS

DELIVERED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

It is obvious to any one, who reads the New Testament, that the doctrine of redemption, and consequently of the Gospel, is founded upon the supposition of Adam's fall. To understand, therefore, what we are restored to by Jesus Christ, we must consider what the Scriptures show we lost by Adam. This I thought worthy of a diligent and unbiassed search: since I found the two extremes that men run into on this point, either on the one hand shook the foundations of all religion, or, on the other, made Christianity almost nothing: for while some men would have all Adam's posterity doomed to eternal, infinite punishment, for the transgression of Adam, whom millions had never heard of, and no one had authorised to transact for him, or be his representative; this seemed to others so little consistent with the justice or goodness of the great and infinite God, that they thought there was no redemption necessary, and consequently, that there was none; rather than admit of it upon a supposition so

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derogatory to the honour and attributes of that infinite Being; and so made Jesus Christ nothing but the restorer and preacher of pure natural religion; thereby doing violence to the whole tenor of the New Testament. And, indeed, both sides will be suspected to have trespassed this way against the written word of God, by any one, who does but take it to be a collection of writings, designed by God, for the instruction of the illiterate bulk of mankind, in the way to salvation; and therefore, generally, and in necessary points, to be understood in the plain direct meaning of the words and phrases: such as they may be supposed to have had in the mouths of the speakers, who used them according to the language of that time and country wherein they lived; without such learned, artificial, and forced senses of them, as are sought out, and put upon them, in most of the systems of divinity, according to the notions that each one has been bred up in.

To one that, thus unbiassed, reads the Scriptures, what Adam fell from (is visible), was the state of perfect obedience, which is called justice in the New Testament; though the word, which in the original signifies justice, be translated righteousness: and by this fall he lost paradise, wherein was tranquillity and the tree of life; *i. e.* he lost bliss and immortality. The penalty annexed to the breach of the law, with the sentence pronounced by God upon it, show this. The penalty stands thus, Gen. ii. 17, "In the day, that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." How was this executed? He did eat: but, in the day he did eat, he did not actually die; but was turned out of paradise from the tree of life, and shut out for ever from it, lest he should take thereof, and live for ever. This shows, that the state of paradise was a state of immortality, of life without end; which he lost that very day that he eat: his life began from thence to shorten, and waste, and to have an end; and from thence, to his actual death, was but like the time of a prisoner, between the sentence passed and the execution, which was in view and certain. Death then entered, and

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showed his face, which before was shut out, and not known. So St. Paul, Rom. v. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; *i. e.* a state of death and mortality: and, 1 Cor. xv. 22, "In Adam all die;" *i. e.* by reason of his transgression, all men are mortal, and come to die.

This is so clear in these cited places, and so much the current of the New Testament, that nobody can deny, but that the doctrine of the Gospel is, that death came on all men by Adam's sin; only they differ about the signification of the word death: for some will have it to be a state of guilt, wherein not only he, but all his posterity was so involved, that every one descended of him deserved endless torment, in hell-fire. I shall say nothing more here, how far, in the apprehensions of men, this consists with the justice and goodness of God, having mentioned it above: but it seems a strange way of understanding a law, which requires the plainest and directest words, that by death should be meant eternal life in misery. Could any one be supposed, by a law, that says, "For felony thou shalt die," not that he should lose his life; but be kept alive in perpetual, exquisite torments? And would any one think himself fairly dealt with, that was so used?

To this, they would have it be also a state of necessary sinning, and provoking God in every action that men do: a yet harder sense of the word death than the other. God says, that "in the day that thou eatest of the forbidden fruit, thou shalt die;" *i. e.* thou and thy posterity shall be, ever after, incapable of doing any thing, but what shall be sinful and provoking to me, and shall justly deserve my wrath and indignation. Could a worthy man be supposed to put such terms upon the obedience of his subjects? Much less can the righteous God be supposed, as a punishment of one sin, wherewith he is displeased, to put man under the necessity of sinning continually, and so multiplying the provocation. The reason of this strange interpretation, we shall perhaps find, in some mistaken places of the New Testament. I must confess, by death here, I can

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understand nothing but a ceasing to be, the losing of all actions of life and sense. Such a death came on Adam and all his posterity, by his first disobedience in paradise; under which death they should have lain for ever, had it not been for the redemption by Jesus Christ. If by death, threatened to Adam, were meant the corruption of human nature in his posterity, it is strange, that the new Testament should not any where take notice of it, and tell us that corruption seized on all, because of Adam's transgression, as well as it tells us so of death. But, as I remember, every one's sin is charged upon himself only.

Another part of the sentence was, "Cursed is the ground for thy sake: in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: for out of it wast thou taken; dust thou art, and to dust shalt thou return." Gen. iii. 17—19. This shows, that paradise was a place of bliss, as well as immortality; without drudgery, and without sorrow. But, when man was turned out, he was exposed to the toil, anxiety, and frailties of this mortal life, which should end in the dust, out of which he was made, and to which he should return; and then have no more life or sense than the dust had, out of which he was made.

As Adam was turned out of paradise, so all his posterity were born out of it, out of the reach of the tree of life; all, like their father Adam, in a state of mortality, void of the tranquillity and bliss of paradise. Rom. v. 12, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin." But here will occur the common objection that so many stumble at: "How doth it consist with the justness and goodness of God, that the posterity of Adam should suffer for his sin; the innocent be punished for the guilty?" Very well, if keeping one from what he has no right to, be called a punishment; the state of immortality, in paradise, is not due to the posterity of Adam, more than to any other creature. Nay, if God afford them a temporary mortal life, it is his gift; they owe it to his bounty; they could not claim it as their right, nor does

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he injure them when he takes it from them. Had he taken from mankind any thing that was their right, or did he put men in a state of misery, worse than not being, without any fault or demerit of their own; this, indeed, would be hard to reconcile with the notion we have of justice; and much more with the goodness, and other attributes of the Supreme Being, which he has declared of himself; and reason, as well as revelation, must acknowledge to be in him; unless we will confound good and evil, God and Satan. That such a state of extreme, irremediable torment is worse than no being at all; if every one's own sense did not determine against the vain philosophy and foolish metaphysics of some men; yet our Saviour's peremptory decision, Matt. xxvi. 24, has put it past doubt, that one may be in such an estate, that it had been better for him not to have been born. But that such a temporary life as we now have, with all its frailties and ordinary miseries, is better than no being, is evident, by the high value we put upon it ourselves. And therefore, though all die in Adam, yet none are truly punished, but for their own deeds. Rom. ii. 6, "God will render to every one," How? "According to his deeds. To those that obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doth evil." ver. 9. 2 Cor. v. 10, "We must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad." And Christ himself, who knew for what he should condemn men at the last day, assures us, in the two places, where he describes his proceeding at the great judgment, that the sentence of condemnation passes only upon the workers of iniquity, such as neglected to fulfil the law in acts of charity, Matt. vii. 23. Luke xiii. 27. Matt. xxv. 41, 42, &c. And again, John v. 29, our Saviour tells the Jews, that all "shall come forth of their graves, they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." But here is no condemnation of any one, for what his

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forefather Adam had done; which it is not likely should have been omitted, if that should have been a cause, why any one was adjudged to the fire, with the devil and his angels. And he tells his disciples, that when he comes again with his angels, in the glory of his Father, that then he will render to every one according to his works, Matt. xvi. 27.

Adam being thus turned out of paradise, and all his posterity born out of it, the consequence of it was, that all men should die, and remain under death for ever, and so be utterly lost.

From this estate of death, Jesus Christ restores all mankind to life; 1 Cor. xv. 22, "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." How this shall be, the same apostle tells us in the foregoing verse 21, "By man death came, by man also came the resurrection from the dead." Whereby it appears, that the life, which Jesus Christ restores to all men, is that life, which they receive again at the resurrection. Then they recover from death, which otherwise all mankind should have continued under, lost for ever; as appears by St. Paul's arguing, 1 Cor. xv. concerning the resurrection.

And thus men are, by the second Adam, restored to life again; that so by Adam's sin they may none of them lose any thing, which by their own righteousness they might have a title to: for righteousness, or an exact obedience to the law, seems, by the Scripture, to have a claim of right to eternal life, Rom. iv. 4, "To him that worketh," *i. e.* does the works of the law, "is the reward not reckoned of grace, but *of debt.*" And Rev. xxii. 14, "Blessed are they who do his commandments, that they may *have right* to the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God." If any of the posterity of Adam were just, they shall not lose the reward of it, eternal life and bliss, by being his mortal issue: Christ will bring them all to life again; and then they shall be put every one upon his own trial, and receive judgment, as he is found to be righteous, or not. And the righteous, as our Saviour says, Matt. xxv. 46, shall go into eternal life. Nor shall any one miss it, who has done what our Saviour directed the lawyer, who asked,

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Luke x. 25, What he should do to inherit eternal life? "Do this," *i. e.* what is required by the law, "and thou shalt live."

On the other side, it seems the unalterable purpose of the divine justice, that no unrighteous person, no one that is guilty of any breach of the law, should be in paradise: but that the wages of sin should be to every man, as it was to Adam, an exclusion of him out of that happy state of immortality, and bring death upon him. And this is so conformable to the eternal and established law of right and wrong, that it is spoken of too, as if it could not be otherwise. St. James says, chap. i. 15, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death," as it were by a natural and necessary production. "Sin entered into the world, and death by sin," says St. Paul, Rom. v. 12; and vi. 23, "The wages of sin is death." Death is the purchase of any, of every sin. Gal. iii. 10, "Cursed is every one, who continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And of this St. James gives a reason, chap. ii. 10, 11, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all: for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill:" *i. e.* he that offends in any one point, sins against the authority which established the law.

Here then we have the standing and fixed measures of life and death. Immortality and bliss belong to the righteous; those who have lived in an exact conformity to the law of God, are out of the reach of death; but an exclusion from paradise and loss of immortality is the portion of sinners; of all those, who have any way broke that law, and failed of a complete obedience to it, by the guilt of any one transgression. And thus mankind by the law, are put upon the issues of life or death, as they are righteous or unrighteous, just or unjust; *i. e.* exact performers or transgressors of the law.

But yet, "All having sinned," Rom. iii. 23, "and come short of the glory of God," *i. e.* the kingdom of God in heaven (which is often called his glory) "both Jews and Gentiles;" ver. 22, so that, "by the

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deeds of the law," no one could be justified, ver. 20, it follows, that no one could then have eternal life and bliss.

Perhaps it will be demanded, "Why did God give so hard a law to mankind, that, to the apostle's time, no one of Adam's issue had kept it? As appears by Rom. iii. and Gal. iii. 21, 22."

Answ. It was such a law as the purity of God's nature required, and must be the law of such a creature as man; unless God would have made him a rational creature, and not required him to have lived by the law of reason; but would have countenanced in him irregularity and disobedience to that light which he had, and that rule which was suitable to his nature; which would have been to have authorised disorder, confusion, and wickedness in his creatures: for that this law was the law of reason, or, as it is called, of nature, we shall see by and by; and if rational creatures will not live up to the rule of their reason, who shall excuse them? If you will admit them to forsake reason in one point, why not in another? Where will you stop? To disobey God in any part of his commands (and it is he that commands what reason does) is direct rebellion; which, if dispensed with in any point, government and order are at an end; and there can be no bounds set to the lawless exorbitancy of unconfined man. The law therefore was, as St. Paul tells us, Rom. vii. 12, "holy, just, and good," and such as it ought and could not otherwise be.

This then being the case, that whoever is guilty of any sin should certainly die, and cease to be; the benefit of life, restored by Christ at the resurrection, would have been no great advantage (for as much as, here again, death must have seized upon all mankind, because all had sinned; for the wages of sin is everywhere death, as well after as before the resurrection) if God had not found out a way to justify some, *i. e.* so many as obeyed another law, which God gave; which in the New Testament is called "the law of faith," Rom. iii. 27, and is opposed to "the law of works."

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And therefore the punishment of those, who would not follow him, was to lose their souls, *i. e.* their lives, Mark viii. 35—38, as is plain, considering the occasion it was spoke on.

The better to understand the law of faith, it will be convenient, in the first place, to consider the law of works. The law of works then, in short, is that law which requires perfect obedience, without any remission or abatement; so that, by that law, a man cannot be just, or justified, without an exact performance of every tittle. Such a perfect obedience, in the New Testament, is termed δικαιοσύνη, which we translate righteousness.

The language of this law is, "Do this and live, transgress and die." Lev. xviii. 5, "Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them." Ezek. xx. 11, "I gave them my statutes, and showed them my judgments, which if a man do, he shall even live in them." "Moses," says St. Paul, Rom. x. 5, "describeth the righteousness, which is of the law, that the man, which doth those things, shall live in them." Gal. iii. 12, "The law is not of faith; but that man that doth them shall live in them." On the other side, transgress and die; no dispensation, no atonement. Ver. 10, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

Where this law of works was to be found, the New Testament tells us, viz. in the law delivered by Moses. John i. 17, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Chap. vii. 19, "Did not Moses give you the law?" says our Saviour, "and yet none of you keep the law." And this is the law which he speaks of, where he asks the lawyer, Luke x. 26, "What is written in the law? How readest thou?" ver. 28, "This do, and thou shall live." This is that which St. Paul so often styles the law, without any other distinction, Rom. ii. 13, "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law are justified." It is needless to quote any more

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places; his epistles are full of it, especially this of the Romans.

"But the law given by Moses, being not given to all mankind, how are all men sinners; since, without a law, there is no transgression?" To this the apostle, ver. 14, answers, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do, (*i. e.* find it reasonable to do) by nature the things contained in the law; these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts; their consciences also bearing witness, and amongst themselves their thoughts accusing or excusing one another." By which, and other places in the following chapter, it is plain, that under the law of works, is comprehended also the law of nature, knowable by reason, as well as the law given by Moses. For, says St. Paul, Rom. iii. 9, 23, "We have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God:" which they could not do without a law.

Nay, whatever God requires any where to be done, without making any allowance for faith, that is a part of the law of works: so that forbidding Adam to eat of the tree of knowledge was part of the law of works. Only we must take notice here, that some of God's positive commands, being for peculiar ends, and suited to particular circumstances of times, places, and persons; have a limited and only temporary obligation, by virtue of God's positive injunction; such as was that part of Moses's law, which concerned the outward worship, or political constitution of the Jews; and is called the ceremonial and judicial law, in contradistinction to the moral part of it; which being conformable to the eternal law of right, is of eternal obligation; and therefore remains in force still, under the Gospel; nor is abrogated by the law of faith, as St. Paul found some ready to infer, Rom. iii. 31, "Do we then make void the law, through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law."

Nor can it be otherwise: for, were there no law of works, there could be no law of faith. For there

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could be no need of faith, which should be counted to men for righteousness; if there were no law, to be the rule and measure of righteousness, which men failed in their obedience to. Where there is no law, there is no sin; all are righteous equally, with or without faith.

The rule, therefore, of right, is the same that ever it was; the obligation to observe it is also the same: the difference between the law of works, and the law of faith, is only this: that the law of works makes no allowance for failing on any occasion. Those that obey are righteous; those that in any part disobey, are unrighteous, and must not expect life, the reward of righteousness. But, by the law of faith, faith is allowed to supply the defect of full obedience; and so the believers are admitted to life and immortality, as if they were righteous. Only here we must take notice, that when St. Paul says, that the Gospel establishes the law, he means the moral part of the law of Moses; for that he could not mean the ceremonial, or political part of it, is evident, by what I quoted out of him just now, where he says, That the Gentiles do, by nature, the things contained in the law, their consciences bearing witness. For the Gentiles neither did, nor thought of, the judicial or ceremonial institutions of Moses; it was only the moral part their consciences were concerned in. As for the rest, St. Paul tells the Galatians, chap. iv. they are not under that part of the law, which, ver. 3, he calls elements of the world; and, ver. 9, weak and beggarly elements. And our Saviour himself, in his Gospel sermon on the mount, tells them, Matt. v. 17, That, whatever they might think, he was not come to dissolve the law, but to make it more full and strict: for that that is meant by πληρῶσαι is evident from the following part of that chapter, where he gives the precepts in a stricter sense than they were received in before. But they are all precepts of the moral law, which he re-enforces. What should become of the ritual law, he tells the woman of Samaria, in these words, John iv. 21, 23: "The hour cometh, when you shall, neither in this mountain,

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nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him."

Thus then, as to the law, in short: the civil and ritual part of the law, delivered by Moses, obliges not Christians, though, to the Jews, it were a part of the law of works; it being a part of the law of nature, that man ought to obey every positive law of God, whenever he shall please to make any such addition to the law of his nature. But the moral part of Moses's law, or the moral law, (which is everywhere the same, the eternal rule of right) obliges Christians, and all men, everywhere, and is to all men the standing law of works. But Christian believers have the privilege to be under the law of faith too; which is that law, whereby God justifies a man for believing, though by his works he be not just or righteous, *i. e.* though he come short of perfect obedience to the law of works. God alone does or can justify, or make just, those who by their works are not so: which he doth, by counting their faith for righteousness, *i. e.* for a complete performance of the law. Rom. iv. 3, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." Ver. 5, "To him that believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Ver. 6, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works;" *i. e.* without a full measure of works, which is exact obedience. Ver. 7, saying, "Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." Ver. 8, "Blessed is the man, to whom the Lord will not impute sin."

This faith, for which God justified Abraham, what was it? It was the believing God, when he engaged his promise in the covenant he made with him. This will be plain to any one, who considers these places together, Gen. xv. 6, "He believed in the Lord, or believed the Lord." For that the Hebrew phrase, "believing in," signifies no more but believing, is plain from St Paul's citation of this place, Rom. iv. 3,

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where he repeats it thus: "Abraham believed God," which he thus explains, ver. 18—22, "Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations: according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And, being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, nor yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God, through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was also able to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness." By which it is clear, that the faith which God counted to Abraham for righteousness, was nothing but a firm belief of what God declared to him; and a steadfast relying on him, for the accomplishment of what he had promised.

"Now this," says St. Paul, ver. 23, 24, "was not writ for his [Abraham's] sake alone, but for us also;" teaching us, that as Abraham was justified for his faith, so also ours shall be accounted to us for righteousness, if we believe God, as Abraham believed him. Whereby it is plain is meant the firmness of our faith, without staggering, and not the believing the same propositions that Abraham believed; viz. that though he and Sarah were old, and past the time and hopes of children, yet he should have a son by her, and by him become the father of a great people, which should possess the land of Canaan. This was what Abraham believed, and was counted to him for righteousness. But nobody, I think, will say, that any one's believing this now, shall be imputed to him for righteousness. The law of faith then, in short, is for every one to believe what God requires him to believe, as a condition of the covenant he makes with him: and not to doubt of the performance of his promises. This the apostle intimates in the close here, ver. 24, "But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead." We must, therefore, examine and see what God requires us to believe now, under the revelation of the Gospel; for the belief of one

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invisible, eternal, omnipotent God, maker of heaven and earth, &c. was required before, as well as now.

What we are now required to believe to obtain eternal life, is plainly set down in the Gospel. St. John tells us, John iii. 36, "He that believeth on the Son, hath eternal life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life." What this believing on him is, we are also told in the next chapter: "The woman saith unto him, I know that the Messiah cometh: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus said unto her, I that speak unto thee am he. The woman then went into the city, and saith to the men, Come see a man that hath told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Messiah? and many of the Samaritans believed on him for the saying of the woman, who testified, he told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, many more believed because of his words, and said to the woman, We believe not any longer, because of thy saying; for we have heard ourselves, and we know that this man is truly the Saviour of the world, the Messiah." John iv. 25, 26, 29, 39, 40, 41, 42.

By which place it is plain, that believing on the Son is the believing that Jesus was the Messiah; giving credit to the miracles he did, and the profession he made of himself. For those who were said to *believe on him*, for the saying of the woman, ver. 39, tell the woman that they now believed not any longer, because of her saying; but that having heard him themselves, they knew, *i. e. believed*, past doubt, *that he was the Messiah.*

This was the great proposition that was then controverted, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, "Whether he was the Messiah or no?" And the assent to that was that which distinguished believers from unbelievers. When many of his disciples had forsaken him, upon his declaring that he was the bread of life, which came down from heaven, "He said to his apostles, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of

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eternal life. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God." John vi. 69. This was the faith which distinguished them from apostates and unbelievers, and was sufficient to continue them in the rank of apostles: and it was upon the same proposition, "That Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of the living God," owned by St. Peter, that our Saviour said, he would build his church, Matt. xvi. 16—18.

To convince men of this, he did his miracles: and their assent to, or not assenting to this, made them to be, or not to be, of his church; believers, or not believers: "The Jews came round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." John x. 24—26. Conformable hereunto, St. John tells us, that "many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus, the Messiah, is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver, and an antichrist; whosoever abideth not in the doctrine of the Messiah, has not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of the Messiah," *i. e.* that Jesus is he, "hath both the Father and the Son." 2 John 7, 9. That this is the meaning of the place, is plain from what he says in his foregoing epistle, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Messiah, is born of God." 1 John v. 1. And therefore, drawing to a close of his Gospel, and showing the end for which he writ it, he has these words: "Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: but these are written that ye may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that, believing, you might have life through his name." John xx. 30, 31. Whereby it is plain, that the Gospel was writ to induce men into a belief of this proposition, "That Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah;" which if they believed, they should have life.

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Accordingly the great question among the Jews was, whether he were the Messiah or no? and the great point insisted on and promulgated in the Gospel was, that he was the Messiah. The first glad tidings of his birth, brought to the shepherds by an angel, was in these words: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people: for to you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord." Luke ii. 11. Our Saviour discoursing with Martha about the means of attaining eternal life, saith to her, John xi. 27, "Whosoever believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, which should come into the world." This answer of hers showeth, what it is to believe in Jesus Christ, so as to have eternal life; viz. to believe that he is the Messiah, the Son of God, whose coming was foretold by the prophets. And thus Andrew and Philip express it: "Andrew says to his brother Simon, we have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. Philip saith to Nathanael, we have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." John i. 41, 45. According to what the Evangelist says in this place, I have, for the clearer understanding of the Scripture, all along put Messiah for Christ: Christ being but the Greek name for the Hebrew Messiah, and both signifying the Anointed.

And that he was the Messiah, was the great truth he took pains to convince his disciples and apostles of; appearing to them after his resurrection: as may be seen Luke xxiv. which we shall more particularly consider in another place. There we read what Gospel our Saviour preached to his disciples and apostles; and that as soon as he was risen from the dead, twice, the very day of his resurrection.

And, if we may gather what was to be believed by all nations from what was preached unto them, we may certainly know what they were commanded, Matt. ult. to teach all nations, by what they actually did teach

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all nations. We may observe, that the preaching of the apostles everywhere in the Acts, tended to this one point, to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Indeed, now, after his death, his resurrection was also commonly required to be believed, as a necessary article, and sometimes solely insisted on: it being a mark and undoubted evidence of his being the Messiah, and necessary now to be believed by those who would receive him as the Messiah. For since the Messiah was to be a Saviour and a king, and to give life and a kingdom to those who received him, as we shall see by and by; there could have been no pretence to have given him out for the Messiah, and to require men to believe him to be so, who thought him under the power of death, and corruption of the grave. And therefore those who believed him to be the Messiah, must believe that he was risen from the dead: and those who believed him to be risen from the dead, could not doubt of his being the Messiah. But of this more in another place.

Let us see therefore, how the apostles preached Christ, and what they proposed to their hearers to believe. St. Peter at Jerusalem, Acts ii. by his first sermon, converted three thousand souls. What was his word, which, as we are told, ver. 41, "they gladly received, and thereupon were baptized?" That may be seen from ver. 22 to 36. In short, this; which is the conclusion, drawn from all that he had said, and which he presses on them, as the thing they were to believe, viz. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, Lord and Messiah," ver. 36.

To the same purpose was his discourse to the Jews, in the temple, Acts iii. the design whereof you have, ver. 18. "But those things that God before had showed, by the mouth of all his prophets, that the Messiah should suffer, he hath so fulfilled."

In the next chapter, Acts iv. Peter and John being examined, about the miracle on the lame man, profess it to have been done in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, who was the Messiah, in whom alone there was salvation, ver. 10—12. The same thing they confirm to

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them again, Acts v. 29—32. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus the Messiah," ver. 42.

What was Stephen's speech to the council, Acts vii. but a reprehension to them, that they were the betrayers and murderers of the Just One? Which is the title by which he plainly designs the Messiah, whose coming was foreshown by the prophets, ver. 51, 52.—And that the Messiah was to be without sin, (which is the import of the word Just) was the opinion of the Jews, appears from John ix. ver. 22, compared with 24.

Acts viii. Philip carries the Gospel to Samaria: "Then Philip went down to Samaria, and preached to them." What was it he preached? You have an account of it in this one word, "the Messiah," ver. 5. This being that alone which was required of them, to believe that Jesus was the Messiah: which when they believed, they were baptized. "And when they believed Philip's preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus the Messiah, they were baptized, both men and women," ver. 12.

Philip being sent from thence, by a special call of the Spirit, to make an eminent convert; out of Isaiah preaches to him Jesus, ver. 35. And what it was he preached concerning Jesus, we may know by the profession of faith the eunuch made, upon which he was admitted to baptism, ver. 37. "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God:" which is as much as to say, I believe that he, whom you call Jesus Christ, is really and truly the Messiah, that was promised. For, that believing him to be the Son of God, and to be the Messiah, was the same thing, may appear, by comparing John i. 45, with ver. 49, where Nathanael owns Jesus to be the Messiah, in these terms: "Thou art the Son of God; thou art the king of Israel." So the Jews, Luke xxii. 70, asking Christ, whether he were the Son of God, plainly demanded of him, whether he were the Messiah? Which is evident, by comparing that with the three preceding verses. They ask him, ver. 67, Whether he were the Messiah? He answers, "If I tell you, you will not believe:" but withal tells

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them, that from thenceforth he should be in possession of the kingdom of the Messiah, expressed in these words, ver. 69: "Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God:" which made them all cry out, "Art thou then the Son of God?" *i. e.* Dost thou then own thyself to be the Messiah? To which he replies, "Ye say that I am." That the Son of God was the known title of the Messiah at that time, amongst the Jews, we may see also, from what the Jews say to Pilate, John xix. 7, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself THE SON OF GOD;" *i. e.* by making himself the Messiah, the prophet which was to come, but falsely; and therefore he deserves to die by the law, Deut. xviii. 20. That this was the common signification of the Son of God, is farther evident, from what the chief priests, mocking him, said when he was on the cross, Matt. xxvii. 42, "He saved others, himself he cannot save: if he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the SON OF GOD;" *i. e.* He said, he was the Messiah: but it is plainly false; for, if he were, God would deliver him: for the Messiah is to be king of Israel, the Saviour of others; but this man cannot save himself. The chief priests mention here the two titles, then in use, whereby the Jews commonly designed the Messiah, viz. "Son of God, and king of Israel." That of Son of God was so familiar a compellation of the Messiah, who was then so much expected and talked of, that the Romans it seems who lived amongst them, had learned it, as appears from ver. 54. "Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, truly this was the SON OF GOD;" this was that extraordinary person that was looked for.

Acts ix. St. Paul, exercising the commission to preach the Gospel, which he had received in a miraculous way, v. 20, "Straightway preached Christ in the synagogues,

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that he is the Son of God;" *i. e.* that Jesus was the Messiah: for Christ, in this place, is evidently a proper name. And that this was it, which Paul preached, appears from ver. 22, "Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews, who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this is the very Christ," *i. e.* the Messiah.

Peter, when he came to Cornelius at Cæsarea, who, by a vision, was ordered to send for him, as St. Peter on the other side was by a vision commanded to go to him; what does he teach him? His whole discourse, Acts x. tends to show what he says God commanded the Apostles, "To preach unto the people, and to testify, that it is he [Jesus] which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and the dead. And that it was to him, that all the prophets give witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall have remission of sins," ver. 42, 43. "This is the word which God sent to the children of Israel; that WORD, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, ver. 36, 37. And these are the words, which had been promised to Cornelius, Acts xi. 14, "Whereby he and all his house should be saved:" which words amount only to thus much: that Jesus was the Messiah, the Saviour that was promised. Upon their receiving of this, (for this was all that was taught them) the Holy Ghost fell on them, and they were baptized. It is observable here, that the Holy Ghost fell on them before they were baptized, which, in other places, converts received not till after baptism. The reason whereof seems to be this, that God, by bestowing on them the Holy Ghost, did thus declare from heaven, that the Gentiles, upon believing Jesus to be the Messiah, ought to be admitted into the church by baptism, as well as the Jews. Whoever reads St. Peter's defence, Acts xi. when he was accused by those of the circumcision, that he had not kept that distance which he ought with the uncircumcised, will be of this opinion; and see by what he says, ver. 15, 16, 17, that this was the ground, and an irresistible autho-

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rity to him for doing so strange a thing, as it appeared to the Jews, (who alone yet were members of the Christian church) to admit Gentiles into their communion, upon their believing. And therefore St. Peter, in the foregoing chapter, Acts x. before he would baptize them, proposes this question, "to those of the circumcision, which came with him, and were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost: can any one forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" ver. 47. And when some of the sect of the Pharisees, who believed, thought it needful that the converted Gentiles should be circumcised and keep the law of Moses, Acts xv. "Peter rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, you know that a good while ago God made choice amongst us, that the Gentiles," viz. Cornelius, and those here converted with him, "by my mouth should hear the Gospel, and believe. And God, who knowéth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith," v. 7—9. So that both Jews and Gentiles, who believed Jesus to be the Messiah, received thereupon the seal of baptism; whereby they were owned to be his, and distinguished from unbelievers. From what is above said, we may observe, that this preaching Jesus to be the Messiah is called the Word, and the Word of God; and believing it, receiving the Word of God, vid. Acts x. 36, 37, and xi. 1, 19, 20, and the word of the Gospel, Acts xv. 7. And so likewise in the history of the Gospel, what Mark, chap. iv. 14, 15, calls simply the word, St. Luke calls the Word of God, Luke viii. 11. And St. Matthew, chap. xiii. 19, the word of the kingdom; which were, it seems, in the Gospel-writers, synonymous terms, and are so to be understood by us.

But to go on: Acts xiii. Paul preaches in the synagogue at Antioch, where he makes it his business to convince the Jews, that "God, according to his promise, had of the seed of David raised to Israel a Saviour Jesus." v. 24. That he was He of whom the

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prophets writ, v. 25—29, *i. e.* the Messiah: and that, as a demonstration of his being so, God had raised him from the dead, v. 30. From whence he argues thus, v. 32, 33: We evangelize to you, or bring you this Gospel, "how that the promise which was made to our fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, in that he hath raised Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee." And having gone on to prove him to be the Messiah, by his resurrection from the dead, he makes this conclusion, v. 38, 39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins; and by him all who believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses." This is in this chapter called "the word of God," over and over again: compare v. 42 with 44, 46, 48, 49, and chap. xii. v. 24.

Acts xvii. 2—4. At Thessalonica, "Paul, as his manner was, went into the synagogue, and three sabbath days reasoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures; opening and alleging, that the Messiah must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead: and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Messiah. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas: but the Jews which believed not, set the city in an uproar." Can there be any thing plainer, than that the assenting to this proposition, that Jesus was the Messiah, was that which distinguished the believers from the unbelievers? For this was that alone, which, three sabbaths, Paul endeavoured to convince them of, as the text tells us in direct words.

From thence he went to Berœa, and preached the same thing; and the Berœans are commended, v. 11, for searching the Scriptures, whether those things, *i. e.* which he had said, v. 2, 3, concerning Jesus's being the Messiah, were true or no.

The same doctrine we find him preaching at Corinth, Acts xviii. 4—6, "And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks. And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Mace-

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donia, Paul was pressed in spirit, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was the Messiah. And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Greeks."

Upon the like occasion he tells the Jews at Antioch, Acts xiii. 46, "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing you put it off from you, we turn to the Gentiles." It is plain here, St. Paul's charging their blood on their own heads, is for opposing this single truth, that Jesus was the Messiah; that salvation or perdition depends upon believing or rejecting this one proposition. I mean, this is all that is required to be believed by those who acknowledge but one eternal and invisible God, the Maker of heaven and earth, as the Jews did. For that there is something more required to salvation, besides believing, we shall see hereafter. In the meantime, it is fit here on this occasion to take notice, that though the Apostles in their preaching to the Jews and the devout (as we translate the word σεβόμενοι, who were proselytes of the gate, and the worshippers of one eternal and invisible God) said nothing of the believing in this one true God, the Maker of heaven and earth; because it was needless to press this to those who believed and professed it already (for to such, it is plain, were most of their discourses hitherto). Yet when they had to do with idolatrous heathens, who were not yet come to the knowledge of the one only true God; they began with that, as necessary to be believed; it being the foundation on which the other was built, and without which it could signify nothing.

Thus Paul speaking to the idolatrous Lystrians, who would have sacrificed to him and Barnabas, says, Acts xiv. 15, "We preach unto you, that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, who made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain

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from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

Thus also he proceeded with the idolatrous Athenians, Acts xvii. telling them, upon occasion of the altar dedicated to the unknown God, "whom you ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God who made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.—Forasmuch, then, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art, or man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." So that we see, where any thing more was necessary to be proposed to be believed, as there was to the heathen idolaters, there the Apostles were careful not to omit it.

Acts xviii. 4, "Paul at Corinth reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath-day, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was the Messiah." Ver. 11, "And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God amongst them;" *i. e.* the good news that Jesus was the Messiah, as we have already shown is meant by "the Word of God."

Apollos, another preacher of the Gospel, when he was instructed in the way of God more perfectly, what did he teach but this same doctrine? As we may see in this account of him, Acts xviii. 27, that "when he was come into Achaia, he helped the brethren much, who had believed through grace. For he mightily convinced the Jews, and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Messiah."

St. Paul, in the account he gives of himself before Festus and Agrippa, professes this alone to be the doctrine he taught after his conversion; for, says he, Acts xxvi. 22, "Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that the Messiah should suffer,

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and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles." Which was no more than to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. This is that which, as we have above observed, is called the Word of God; Acts xi. 1, compared with the foregoing chapter, from v. 34 to the end. And xiii. 42, compared with 44, 46, 48, 49, and xvii. 13, compared with v. 11, 13. It is also called "the Word of the Gospel," Acts xv. 7. And this is that Word of God, and that Gospel, which, wherever their discourses are set down, we find the Apostles preached; and was that faith which made both Jews and Gentiles believers and members of the church of Christ; purifying their hearts, Acts xv. 9, and carrying with it remission of sins, Acts x. 43. So that all that was to be believed for justification, was no more but this single proposition, that "Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, or the Messiah." All, I say, that was to be believed for justification: for that it was not all that was required to be done for justification, we shall see hereafter.

Though we have seen above, from what our Saviour has pronounced himself, John iii. 36, "that he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him;" and are taught from John iv. 39, compared with v. 42, that believing on him, is believing that he is the Messiah, the Saviour of the world; and the confession made by St. Peter, Matt. xvi. 16, that he is "the Messiah, the Son of the living God," being the rock on which our Saviour has promised to build his church; though this, I say, and what else we have already taken notice of, be enough to convince us what it is we are in the Gospel required to believe to eternal life, without adding what we have observed from the preaching of the Apostles; yet it may not be amiss, for the farther clearing this matter, to observe what the Evangelists deliver concerning the same thing, though in different words; which, therefore, perhaps, are not so generally taken notice of to this purpose.

We have above observed, from the words of Andrew and Philip compared, that "the Messiah, and him of

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whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write," signify the same thing. We shall now consider that place, John i. a little farther. Ver. 41, Andrew says to Simon, "We have found the Messiah." Philip, on the same occasion, v. 45, says to Nathanael, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael, who disbelieved this, when, upon Christ's speaking to him, he was convinced of it, declares his assent to it in these words: "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel." From which it is evident, that to believe him to be "Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write," or to be the "Son of God," or to be "the king of Israel," was in effect the same as to believe him to be the Messiah: and an assent to that was what our Saviour received for believing. For, upon Nathanael's making a confession in these words, "Thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel; Jesus answered and said to him, Because I said to thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, dost thou *believe?* Thou shalt see greater things than these," ver. 51. I desire any one to read the latter part of the first of John, from ver. 25, with attention, and tell me, whether it be not plain, that this phrase, The Son of God, is an expression used for the Messiah. To which let him add Martha's declaration of her faith, John xi. 27, in these words: "I believe that thou art the Messiah, THE SON OF GOD, who should come into the world;" and that passage of St. John xx. 31, "That ye might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, THE SON OF GOD; and that believing, ye might have life, through his name:" and then tell me, whether he can doubt that Messiah, the Son of God, were synonymous terms at that time amongst the Jews.

The prophecy of Daniel, chap. ix. when he is called "Messiah the Prince;" and the mention of his government and kingdom, and the deliverance by him, in Isaiah, Daniel, and other prophecies, understood of the Messiah, were so well known to the Jews, and had so raised their hopes of him about this time, which, by their account, was to be the time of his coming, to

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restore the kingdom of Israel; that Herod no sooner heard of the magi's inquiry after "Him that was born king of the Jews," Matt. ii. but he forthwith "demanded of the chief priests and scribes where the Messiah should be born," ver. 4. Not doubting but, if there were any king born to the Jews, it was the Messiah: whose coming was now the general expectation, as appears, Luke iii. 15, "The people being in expectation, and all men musing in their hearts of John, whether he were the Messiah or not." And when the priests and Levites sent to ask him who he was; he, understanding their meaning, answers, John i. 20, "That he was not the Messiah;" but he bears witness, that Jesus "is the Son of God," *i. e.* the Messiah, ver. 34.

This looking for the Messiah, at this time, we see also in Simeon; who is said to be "waiting for the consolation of Israel," Luke ii. 21. And having the child Jesus in his arms, he says, he had "seen the salvation of the Lord," ver. 30. And "Anna coming at the same instant into the temple, she gave thanks also unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Israel," ver. 38. And of Joseph of Arimathea, it is said, Mark xv. 43, That "he also expected the kingdom of God:" by all which was meant the coming of the Messiah; and Luke xix. 11, it is said, "They thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

This being premised, let us see what it was that John the Baptist preached, when he first entered upon his ministry. That St. Matthew tells us, chap. iii. 1, 2, "In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." This was a declaration of the coming of the Messiah: the kingdom of heaven, and the kingdom of God, being the same, as is clear out of several places of the Evangelists; and both signifying the kingdom of the Messiah. The profession which John the Baptist made, when sent to the Jews, John i. 19, was that "he was not the Messiah;" but that Jesus was. This will appear to any one, who will compare ver.

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26—34, with John iii. 27, 30. The Jews being very inquisitive to know, whether John were the Messiah, he positively denies it; but tells them, he was only his forerunner; and that there stood one amongst them, who would follow him, whose shoe-latchet he was not worthy to untie. The next day, seeing Jesus, he says, he was the man; and that his own baptizing in water was only that Jesus might be manifested to the world; and that he knew him not, till he saw the Holy Ghost descend upon him: he that sent him to baptize, having told him, that he on whom he should see the Spirit descend, and rest upon, he it was that should baptize with the Holy Ghost; and that therefore he witnessed, that "this was the Son of God," ver. 34, *i. e.* the Messiah; and, chap. iii. 26, &c. they come to John the Baptist, and tell him, that Jesus baptized, and that all men went to him. John answers, He has his authority from heaven; you know I never said, I was the Messiah, but that I was sent before him. He must increase, but I must decrease; for God hath sent him, and he speaks the words of God; and God hath given all things into the hands of his Son. "And he that believes on the Son, hath eternal life;" the same doctrine, and nothing else, but what was preached by the Apostles afterwards: as we have seen all through the Acts, *v. g.* that Jesus was the Messiah. And thus it was, that John bears witness of our Saviour, as Jesus himself says, John v. 33.

This also was the declaration given of him at his baptism, by a voice from heaven: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Matt. iii. 17. Which was a declaration of him to be the Messiah, the Son of God, being (as we have showed) understood to signify the Messiah. To which we may add the first mention of him after his conception, in the words of the angel to Joseph, Matt. i. 21. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus," or Saviour; "for he shall save his people from their sins." It was a received doctrine in the Jewish nation, that at the coming of the Messiah, all their sins should be forgiven them. These words, therefore, of the angel, we may look upon as a declaration that Jesus was the Messiah; whereof these

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words, "his people," are a farther mark: which suppose him to have a people, and consequently to be a king.

After his baptism, Jesus himself enters upon his ministry. But, before we examine what it was he proposed to be believed, we must observe, that there is a threefold declaration of the Messiah.

I. By miracles. The spirit of prophecy had now for many ages forsaken the Jews: and, though their commonwealth were not quite dissolved, but that they lived under their own laws, yet they were under a foreign dominion, subject to the Romans. In this state, their account of the time being up, they were in expectation of the Messiah, and of deliverance by him in a kingdom he was to set up, according to their ancient prophecies of him: which gave them hopes of an extraordinary man yet to come from God, who, with an extraordinary and divine power, and miracles, should evidence his mission, and work their deliverance. And, of any such extraordinary person, who should have the power of doing miracles, they had no other expectation, but only of their Messiah. One great prophet and worker of miracles, and only one more, they expected; who was to be the Messiah. And therefore we see the people justified their believing in him, *i. e.* their believing him to be the Messiah, because of the miracles he did; John vii. 31, "And many of the people believed in him, and said, When the Messiah cometh, will he do more miracles than this man hath done?" And when the Jews, at the feast of dedication, John x. 24, 25, coming about him, said unto him, "How long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be the Messiah, tell us plainly; Jesus answered them, I told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do in my Father's name, bear witness of me." And, John v. 36, he says, "I have a greater witness than that of John; for the works, which the Father hath given me to do, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." Where, by the way, we may observe, that his being "sent by the Father," is but another way of expressing the Messiah; which is

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evident from this place here, John v. compared with that of John x. last quoted. For there he says, that his works bear witness of him: And what was that witness? viz. that he was "the Messiah." Here again he says, that his works bear witness of him: And what is that witness? viz. "that the Father sent him." By which we are taught, that to be sent by the Father, and to be the Messiah, was the same thing, in his way of declaring himself. And accordingly we find, John iv. 53, and xi. 45, and elsewhere, many hearkened and assented to his testimony, and believed on him, seeing the things that he did.

2. Another way of declaring the coming of the Messiah, was by phrases and circumlocutions that did signify or intimate his coming; though not in direct words pointing out the person. The most usual of these were, "The kingdom of God, and of heaven;" because it was that which was often spoken of the Messiah, in the Old Testament, in very plain words: and a kingdom was that which the Jews most looked after and wished for. In that known place, Isaiah ix. "The GOVERNMENT shall be upon his shoulders; he shall be called the PRINCE of peace: of the increase of his GOVERNMENT and peace there shall be no end; upon the THRONE of David, and upon his KINGDOM, to order it, and to establish it with judgment, and with justice, from henceforth even for ever." Micah v. 2, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be the RULER in Israel." And Daniel, besides that he calls him "Messiah the PRINCE," chap. ix. 25, in the account of his vision "of the Son of man," chap. vii. 13, 14, says, "There was given him dominion, glory, and a KINGDOM, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his KINGDOM that which shall not be destroyed." So that the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven, were common phrases amongst the Jews, to signify the times of the Messiah. Luke xiv. 15, "One of the Jews that sat

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at meat with him, said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Chap. xvii. 20, The Pharisees demanded, "When the kingdom of God should come?" And St. John Baptist came, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" a phrase he would not have used in preaching, had it not been understood.

There are other expressions that signified the Messiah and his coming, which we shall take notice of, as they come in our way.

3. By plain and direct words, declaring the doctrine of the Messiah, speaking out that Jesus was he; as we see the apostles did, when they went about preaching the Gospel, after our Saviour's resurrection. This was the open clear way, and that which one would think the Messiah himself, when he came, should have taken; especially if it were of that moment, that upon men's believing him to be the Messiah, depended the forgiveness of their sins; and yet we see, that our Saviour did not: but on the contrary, for the most part, made no other discovery of himself, at least in Judea, and at the beginning of his ministry, but in the two former ways, which were more obscure; not declaring himself to be the Messiah any otherwise than as it might be gathered from the miracles he did, and the conformity of his life and actions with the prophecies of the Old Testament concerning him; and from some general discourses of the kingdom of the Messiah being come, under the name of the "kingdom of God, and of heaven." Nay, so far was he from publicly owning himself to be the Messiah, that he forbid the doing of it: Mark viii. 27—30, "He asked his disciples, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist; but some say Elias; and others, one of the prophets." (So that it is evident, that even those who believed him an extraordinary person, knew not yet who he was, or that he gave himself out for the Messiah, though this was in the third year of his ministry, and not a year before his death). "And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answered and said unto him, Thou art the Messiah.

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And he charged them, that they should tell no man of him." Luke iv. 41, "And devils came out of many, crying, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of God: and he, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak, that they knew him to be the Messiah." Mark iii. 11, 12, "Unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God: and he straitly charged them, that they should not make him known." Here again we may observe, from the comparing of the two texts, that "Thou art the Son of God," or, "Thou art the Messiah," were indifferently used for the same thing. But to return to the matter in hand.

This concealment of himself will seem strange, in one who was come to bring light into the world, and was to suffer death for the testimony of the truth. This reservedness will be thought to look as if he had a mind to conceal himself, and not to be known to the world for the Messiah, nor to be believed on as such. But we shall be of another mind, and conclude this proceeding of his according to divine wisdom, and suited to a fuller manifestation and evidence of his being the Messiah, when we consider that he was to fill out the time foretold of his ministry; and after a life illustrious in miracles and good works, attended with humility, meekness, patience, and sufferings, and every way conformable to the prophesies of him; should be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and with all quiet and submission be brought to the cross, though there were no guilt nor fault found in him. This could not have been if, as soon as he appeared in public, and began to preach, he had presently professed himself to have been the Messiah; the king that owned that kingdom he published to be at hand. For the sanhedrim would then have laid hold on it to have got him into their power, and thereby have taken away his life; at least they would have disturbed his ministry, and hindered the work he was about. That this made him cautious, and avoid, as much as he could, the occasions of provoking them, and falling into their hands, is plain from John vii. 1, "After these things Jesus walked in Gali-

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lee;" out of the way of the Chief Priests and rulers; "for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." Thus, making good what he foretold them at Jerusalem, when at the first passover after his beginning to preach the Gospel, upon his curing the man at the pool of Bethesda, they sought to kill him, John v. 16, "Ye have not," says he, ver. 38, "his word abiding amongst you; for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not." This was spoken more particularly to the Jews of Jerusalem, who were the forward men, zealous to take away his life: and it imports, that, because of their unbelief and opposition to him, the word of God, *i. e.* the preaching of the kingdom of the Messiah, which is often called "the word of God," did not stay amongst them, he could not stay amongst them, preach and explain to them the kingdom of the Messiah.

That the word of God, here, signifies "the word of God," that should make Jesus known to them to be the Messiah, is evident from the context: and this meaning of this place is made good by the event. For, after this, we hear no more of Jesus at Jerusalem till the Pentecost come twelvemonth; though it is not to be doubted, but that he was there the next passover, and other feasts between; but privately. And now at Jerusalem, at the feast of Pentecost, near fifteen months after, he says little of any thing, and not a word of the kingdom of heaven being come, or at hand; nor did he any miracle there. And returning to Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, it is plain, that from this time till then, which was a year and a half, he had not taught them at Jerusalem.

For, 1, it is said, John vii. 2, 15, That, he teaching in the temple at the feast of tabernacles, "The Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" A sign they had not been used to his preaching: for, if they had, they would not now have marvelled.

2. Ver. 19, He says thus to them: "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you keep the law? Why go ye about to kill me? One work," or miracle,

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"I did here amongst you, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision, and ye on the sabbath-day circumcise a man: if a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, that the law of Moses should not be broken, are ye angry with me, because I have made a man every way whole on the sabbath-day?" Which is a direct defence of what he did at Jerusalem, a year and a half before the work he here speaks of. We find he had not preached to them there, from that time to this; but had made good what he had told them, ver. 38, "Ye have not the word of God remaining among you, because whom he hath sent ye believe not." Whereby, I think, he signifies his not staying, and being frequent amongst them at Jerusalem, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom; because their great unbelief, opposition, and malice to him, would not permit it.

This was manifestly so in fact: for the first miracle he did at Jerusalem, which was at the second passover after his baptism, brought him in danger of his life. Hereupon we find he forbore preaching again there till the feast of tabernacles, immediately preceding his last passover: so that till the half a year before his passion, he did but one miracle, and preached but once publicly at Jerusalem. These trials he made there; but found their unbelief such, that if he had staid and persisted to preach the good tidings of the kingdom, and to show himself by miracles among them, he could not have had time and freedom to do those works which his Father had given him to finish, as he says, ver. 36, of this fifth of St. John.

When, upon the curing of the withered hand on the sabbath-day, "The Pharisees took council with the Herodians, how they might destroy him, Jesus withdrew himself, with his disciples, to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan, and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude; when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him, and he healed them all, and *charged them, that they should not make him*

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known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying, Behold, my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets." Matt. xii. Mark iii.

And, John xi. 47, upon the news of our Saviour's raising Lazarus from the dead, "The Chief Priests and Pharisees convened the sanhedrim, and said, What do we? For this man does many miracles." Ver. 53, "Then from that day forth they took counsel together for to put him to death." Ver. 54, "Jesus therefore walked no more openly amongst the Jews." His miracles had now so much declared him to be the Messiah, that the Jews could no longer bear him, nor he trust himself amongst them; "But went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim; and there continued with his disciples." This was but a little before his last passover, as appears by the following words, ver. 55, "And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand," and he could not, now his miracles had made him so well known, have been secure, the little time that remained, till his hour was fully come, if he had not, with his wonted and necessary caution, withdrawn; "And walked no more openly amongst the Jews," till his time (at the next passover) was fully come; and then again he appeared amongst them openly.

Nor would the Romans have suffered him, if he had gone about preaching, that he was the king whom the Jews expected. Such an accusation would have been forwardly brought against him by the Jews, if they could have heard it out of his own mouth; and that had been his public doctrine to his followers, which was openly preached by the apostles after his death, when he appeared no more. And of this they were accused Acts xvii. 5—9, "But the Jews, which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city in an uproar, and assaulted the house

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of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. And when they found them [Paul and Silas] not, they drew Jason, and certain brethren, unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down, are come hither also; whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying, That there is another king, one Jesus. And they troubled the people, and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things: and when they had taken security of Jason and the other, they let them go."

Though the magistrates of the world had no great regard to the talk of a king who had suffered death, and appeared no longer anywhere; yet, if our Saviour had openly declared this of himself in his lifetime, with a train of disciples and followers every where owning and crying him up for their king, the Roman governors of Judea could not have forborn to have taken notice of it, and have made use of their force against him. This the Jews were not mistaken in; and therefore made use of it as the strongest accusation, and likeliest to prevail with Pilate against him, for the taking away his life; it being treason, and an unpardonable offence, which could not escape death from a Roman deputy, without the forfeiture of his own life. Thus then they accuse him to Pilate, Luke xxiii. 2, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, that he himself is a king;" or rather "the Messiah, the King."

Our Saviour, indeed, now that his time was come, (and he in custody, and forsaken of all the world, and so out of all danger of raising any sedition or disturbance) owns himself to Pilate to be a king; after first having told Pilate, John xviii. 36, "That his kingdom was not of this world;" and, for a kingdom in another world, Pilate knew that his master at Rome concerned not himself. But had there been any the least appearance of truth in the allegations of the Jews, that he had perverted the nation, forbidding to pay tribute to Cæsar, or drawing the people after him, as their king, Pilate would not so readily have pro-

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nounced him innocent. But we see what he said to his accusers, Luke xxiii. 13, 14: "Pilate, when he had called together the Chief Priests and the rulers of the people, said unto them, You have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof you accuse him: no, nor yet Herod, for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done by him." And therefore, finding a man of that mean condition, and innocent life, (no mover of seditions, or disturber of the public peace) without a friend or a follower, he would have dismissed him, as a king of no consequence; as an innocent man, falsely and maliciously accused by the Jews.

How necessary this caution was in our Saviour, to say or do nothing that might justly offend, or render him suspected to the Roman governor; and how glad the Jews would have been to have had any such thing against him, we may see, Luke xx. 20. The Chief Priests and the Scribes "watched him, and sent forth spies, who should feign themselves just men, that might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor." And the very thing wherein they hoped to entrap him in this place, was paying tribute to Cæsar; which they afterwards falsely accused him of. And what would they have done, if he had before them professed himself to have been the Messiah, their King and deliverer?

And here we may observe the wonderful providence of God, who had so ordered the state of the Jews, at the time when his Son was to come into the world, that though neither their civil constitution nor religious worship were dissolved, yet the power of life and death was taken from them; whereby he had an opportunity to publish "the kingdom of the Messiah;" that is, his own royalty, under the name of "the kingdom of God, and of heaven;" which the Jews well enough understood, and would certainly have put him to death for, had the power been in their own hands. But this being no

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matter of accusation to the Romans, hindered him not from speaking of the "kingdom of heaven," as he did, sometimes in reference to his appearing in the world, and being believed on by particular persons; sometimes in reference to the power should be given him by the Father at his resurrection; and sometimes in reference to his coming to judge the world at the last day, in the full glory and completion of his kingdom. These were ways of declaring himself, which the Jews could lay no hold on, to bring him in danger with Pontius Pilate, and get him seized and put to death.

Another reason there was, that hindered him as much as the former, from professing himself, in express words, to be the Messiah; and that was, that the whole nation of the Jews, expecting at this time their Messiah, and deliverance by him from the subjection they were in to a foreign yoke, the body of the people would certainly, upon his declaring himself to be the Messiah, and their king, have rose up in rebellion, and set him at the head of them. And indeed, the miracles that he did so much disposed them to think him to be the Messiah, that, though shrouded under the obscurity of a mean condition, and a very private simple life; though he passed for a Galilean, (his birth at Bethlehem being then concealed) and assumed not to himself any power or authority, or so much as the name of the Messiah; yet he could hardly avoid being set up by a tumult, and proclaimed their king. So John tells us, chap. vi. 14, 15, "Then those men, when they had seen the miracles that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world. When therefore Jesus perceived that they would come to take him by force to make him king, he departed again into a mountain, himself alone." This was upon his feeding of five thousand with five barley loaves and two fishes. So hard was it for him, doing those miracles which were necessary to testify his mission, and which often drew great multitudes after him, Matt. iv. 25, to keep the heady and hasty multitude from such disorder, as would have involved him in it; and have disturbed the course, and cut short

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the time of his ministry; and drawn on him the reputation and death of a turbulent, seditious malefactor: contrary to the design of his coming, which was, to be offered up a lamb blameless, and void of offence; his innocence appearing to all the world, even to him that delivered him up to be crucified. This it would have been impossible to have avoided, if, in his preaching every where, he had openly assumed to himself the title of their Messiah; which was all was wanting to set the people in a flame; who, drawn by his miracles, and the hopes of finding a Deliverer in so extraordinary a man, followed him in great numbers. We read every where of multitudes, and in Luke xii. 1, of myriads that were gathered about him. This conflux of people, thus disposed, would not have failed, upon his declaring himself to be the Messiah, to have made a commotion, and with force set him up for their King. It is plain, therefore, from these two reasons, why (though he came to preach the Gospel, and convert the world to a belief of his being the Messiah; and though he says so much of his kingdom, under the title of the kingdom of God, and the kingdom of heaven) he yet makes it not his business to persuade them, that he himself is the Messiah, nor does, in his public preaching, declare himself to be him. He inculcates to the people, on all occasions, that the kingdom of God is come; he shows the way of admittance into this kingdom, viz. repentance and baptism; and teaches the laws of it, viz. good life, according to the strictest rules of virtue and morality. But who the King was of this kingdom, he leaves to his miracles to point out, to those who would consider what he did, and make the right use of it now; or to witness to those who should hearken to the apostles hereafter, when they preached it in plain words, and called upon them to believe it, after his resurrection, when there should be no longer room to fear, that it should cause any disturbance in civil societies, and the governments of the world. But he could not declare himself to be the Messiah, without manifest danger of tumult and sedition: and the miracles he did declared it so much, that he was fain often to hide himself, and

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withdraw from the concourse of the people. The leper that he cured, Mark i., though forbid to say any thing, yet "blazed it so abroad, that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places," living in retirement, as appears from Luke v. 16, and there "they came to him from every quarter." And thus he did more than once.

This being premised, let us take a view of the promulgation of the Gospel by our Saviour himself, and see what it was he taught the world, and required men to believe.

The first beginning of his ministry, whereby he showed himself, seems to be at Cana in Galilee, soon after his baptism; where he turned water into wine: of which St. John, chap. ii. 11, says thus: "This beginning of miracles Jesus made, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him." His disciples here believed in him, but we hear not of any other preaching to them, but by this miracle, whereby he "manifested his glory," *i. e.* of being the Messiah, the Prince. So Nathanael, without any other preaching, but only our Saviour's discovering to him, that he knew him after an extraordinary manner, presently acknowledges him to be the Messiah; crying, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel."

From hence, staying a few days at Capernaum, he goes to Jerusalem to the passover, and there he drives the traders out of the temple, John ii. 12—15, saying, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandize." Where we see he uses a phrase, which, by interpretation, signifies that he was the "Son of God," though at that time unregarded. Ver. 16, Hereupon the Jews demand, "What sign dost thou show us, since thou doest these things?" Jesus answered, "Destroy ye this temple, and in three days I will raise it again." This is an instance of what way Jesus took to declare himself: for it is plain, by their reply, the Jews understood him not, nor his disciples neither; for it is said, ver. 22, "When, therefore, he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered, "that he

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said this to them: and they believed the Scripture, and the saying of Jesus to them."

This, therefore, we may look on in the beginning, as a pattern of Christ's preaching, and showing himself to the Jews, which he generally followed afterwards; viz. such a manifestation of himself, as every one at present could not understand; but yet carried such an evidence with it, to those who were well disposed now, or would reflect on it when the whole course of his ministry was over, as was sufficient clearly to convince them that he was the Messiah.

The reason of this method used by our Saviour, the Scripture gives us here, at this his first appearing in public, after his entrance upon his ministry, to be a rule and light to us in the whole course of it: for the next verse taking notice, that many believed on him, "because of his miracles," (which was all the preaching they had,) it is said, ver. 24, "But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men;" *i. e.* he declared not himself so openly to be the Messiah, their King, as to put himself into the power of the Jews, by laying himself open to their malice; who, he knew, would be so ready to lay hold on it to accuse him; for, as the next verse 25 shows, he knew well enough what was in them. We may here farther observe, that "believing in his name" signifies believing him to be the Messiah. Ver. 22 tells us, That "many at the passover believed in his name, when they saw the miracles that he did." What other faith could these miracles produce in them who saw them, but that this was he of whom the Scripture spoke, who was to be their Deliverer?

Whilst he was now at Jerusalem, Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, comes to him, John iii. 1—21, to whom he preaches eternal life by faith in the Messiah, ver. 15 and 17, but in general terms, without naming himself to be that Messiah, though his whole discourse tends to it. This is all we hear of our Saviour the first year of his ministry, but only his baptism, fasting, and temptation in the beginning of it, and spending the rest of it after the passover in Judea, with his disciples, baptizing

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there. But "when he knew that the Pharisees reported, that he made and baptized more disciples than John, he left Judea," and got out of their way again into Galilee, John iv. 1, 3.

In his way back, by the well of Sichar, he discourses with the Samaritan woman; and after having opened to her the true and spiritual worship which was at hand, which the woman presently understands of the times of the Messiah, who was then looked for; thus she answers, ver. 25, "I know that the Messiah cometh: when he is come, he will tell us all things." Whereupon our Saviour, though we hear no such thing from him in Jerusalem or Judea, or to Nicodemus; yet here, to this Samaritan woman, he in plain and direct words owns and declares, that he himself, who talked with her, was the Messiah, ver. 26.

This would seem very strange, that he should be more free and open to a Samaritan than he was to the Jews, were not the reason plain, from what we have observed above. He was now out of Judea, among a people with whom the Jews had no commerce, ver. 9; who were not disposed, out of envy, as the Jews were, to seek his life, or to accuse him to the Roman governor, or to make an insurrection, to set a Jew up for their King. What the consequence was of this discourse with this Samaritan woman we have an account, ver. 28, 39—42, "She left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did: Is not this the Messiah? And many of the Samaritans of that city *believed on him* for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did. So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him, that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. And many more believed because of his own word; and said unto the woman, Now we believe not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves; and we know, (*i. e.* are fully persuaded) that this is indeed the Messiah, the Saviour of the world." By comparing ver. 39 with 41 and 42, it is plain, that

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"believing on him" signifies no more than believing him to be the Messiah.

From Sichar Jesus goes to Nazareth, the place he was bred up in; and there reading in the synagogue a prophecy concerning the Messiah, out of the lxi. of Isaiah, he tells them, Luke iv. 21, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

But being in danger of his life at Nazareth, he leaves it for Capernaum: and then, as St. Matthew informs us, chap. iv. 17, "He began to preach and say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Or, as St. Mark has it, chap. i. 14, 15, "Preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the Gospel;" *i. e.* believe this good news. This removing to Capernaum, and seating himself there in the borders of Zabulon and Naphtali, was, as St. Matthew observes, chap. iv. 13—16, that a prophecy of Isaiah might be fulfilled. Thus the actions and circumstances of his life answered the prophecies, and declared him to be the Messiah. And by what St. Mark says in this place, it is manifest, that the Gospel which he preached and required them to believe, was no other but the good tidings of the coming of the Messiah, and of his kingdom, the time being now fulfilled.

In his way to Capernaum, being come to Cana, a nobleman of Capernaum came to him, ver. 47, "And besought him that he would come down and heal his son; for he was at the point of death." Ver. 48, "Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." Then he returning homewards, and finding that his son began to "mend at the same hour which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth; he himself believed, and his whole house," ver. 53.

Here this nobleman is by the apostles pronounced to be a believer. And what does he believe? Even that which Jesus complains, ver. 48, "they would not *believe*," except they saw signs and wonders; which could be nothing but what those of Samaria in the same

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chapter believed, viz. that he was the Messiah. For we nowhere in the Gospel hear of any thing else, that had been proposed to be believed by them.

Having done miracles, and cured all their sick at Capernaum, he says, "Let us go to the adjoining towns, that I may preach there also; for therefore came I forth," Mark i. 38. Or, as St. Luke has it, chap. iv. 43, he tells the multitude, who would have kept him, that he might not go from them, "I must evangelize," or tell the good tidings of "the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent." And St. Matthew, chap. iv. 23, tells us how he executed this commission he was sent on: "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and curing all diseases." This then was what he was sent to preach every where, viz. the Gospel of the kingdom of the Messiah; and by the miracles and good he did he let them know who was the Messiah.

Hence he goes up to Jerusalem, to the second passover, since the beginning of his ministry. And here, discoursing to the Jews, who sought to kill him, upon occasion of the man whom he had cured carrying his bed on the sabbath-day, and for making God his Father, he tells them that he wrought these things by the power of God, and that he shall do greater things; for that the dead shall, at his summons, be raised; and that he, by a power committed to him from his Father, shall judge them; and that he is sent by his Father; and that whoever shall hear his word, and believe in him that sent him, has eternal life. This though a clear description of the Messiah, yet we may observe, that here, to the angry Jews, who sought to kill him, he says not a word of his kingdom, nor so much as names the Messiah; but yet that he is the Son of God, and sent from God, he refers them to the testimony of John the Baptist, to the testimony of his own miracles, and of God himself in the voice from heaven, and of the Scriptures, and of Moses. He leaves them to learn from these the truth they were to believe, viz. that he was the Messiah sent

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from God. This you may read more at large, John v. 1—47.

The next place where we find him preaching, was on the mount, Matt. v. and Luke vi. This is by much the longest sermon we have of his, anywhere; and, in all likelihood, to the greatest auditory: for it appears to have been to the people gathered to him from Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem, and from beyond Jordan, and that came out of Idumea, and from Tyre and Sidon, mentioned Mark iii. 7, 8, and Luke vi. 17. But in this whole sermon of his, we do not find one word of believing, and therefore no mention of the Messiah, or any intimation to the people who himself was. The reason whereof we may gather from Matt. xii. 16, where "Christ forbids them to make him known;" which supposes them to know already who he was. For that this 12th chapter of St. Matthew ought to precede the sermon in the mount, is plain, by comparing it with Mark ii. beginning at ver. 13, to Mark iii. 8, and comparing those chapters of St. Mark with Luke vi. And I desire my reader, once for all, here to take notice, that I have all along observed the order of time in our Saviour's preaching, and have not, as I think, passed by any of his discourses. In this sermon, our Saviour only teaches them what were the laws of his kingdom, and what they must do who were admitted into it, of which I shall have occasion to speak more at large in another place, being at present only inquiring what our Saviour proposed as matter of faith, to be believed.

After this, John the Baptist sends to him this message, Luke vii. 19, asking, "Art thou he that should come, or do we expect another?" That is, in short, art thou the Messiah? And if thou art, why dost thou let me, thy forerunner, languish in prison? Must I expect deliverance from any other? To which Jesus returns this answer, ver. 22, 23, "Tell John what ye have seen and heard; the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached; and blessed is he who is not offended in me." What it is to be "offended,

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or scandalized in him," we may see by comparing Matt. xiii. 28, and Mark iv. 17, with Luke viii. 13. For what the two first call "scandalized," the last call "standing off from, or forsaking," *i. e.* not receiving him as the Messiah, (vid. Mark vi. 1—6) or revolting from him. Here Jesus refers John, as he did the Jews before, to the testimony of his miracles, to know who he was; and this was generally his preaching, whereby he declared himself to be the Messiah; who was the only prophet to come, whom the Jews had any expectation of; nor did they look for any other person to be sent to them with the power of miracles, but only the Messiah. His miracles, we see by his answer to John the Baptist, he thought a sufficient declaration amongst them, that he was the Messiah. And therefore, upon his curing the possessed of the devil, the dumb, and blind, Matt. xii. the people, who saw the miracles, said, ver. 23, "Is not this the son of David?" As much as to say, Is not this the Messiah? Whereat the Pharisees being offended, said, "He cast out devils by Beelzebub." Jesus, showing the falsehood and vanity of their blasphemy, justifies the conclusion the people made from this miracle, saying, ver. 28, That his casting out devils by the Spirit of God, was an evidence that the kingdom of the Messiah was come.

One thing more there was in the miracles done by his disciples, which showed him to be the Messiah; that they were done in his name. "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, rise up and walk," says St. Peter to the lame man, whom he cured in the temple, Acts iii. 6. And how far the power of that name reached, they themselves seem to wonder, Luke x. 17, "And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject to us in thy name."

From this message from John the Baptist, he takes occasion to tell the people that John was the forerunner of the Messiah; that from the time of John the Baptist the kingdom of the Messiah began; to which time all the prophets and the law pointed, Luke vii. and Matt. xi. Luke viii. 1, "Afterwards he went through every city and village, preaching and showing the good tidings

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of the kingdom of God." Here we see as every where, what his preaching was, and consequently what was to be believed.

Soon after, he preaches from a boat to the people on the shore. His sermon at large we may read Matt. xiii. Mark iv. and Luke viii. But this is very observable, that this second sermon of his, here, is quite different from his former in the mount: for that was all so plain and intelligible, that nothing could be more so; whereas this is all so involved in parables, that even the apostles themselves did not understand it. If we inquire into the reason of this, we shall possibly have some light, from the different subjects of these two sermons. There he preached to the people only morality; clearing the precepts of the law from the false glosses which were received in those days, and setting forth the duties of a good life, in their full obligation and extent, beyond what the judiciary laws of the Israelites did, or the civil laws of any country could prescribe, or take notice of. But here, in this sermon by the sea-side, he speaks of nothing but the kingdom of the Messiah, which he does all in parables. One reason whereof St. Matthew gives us, chap. xiii. 35, "That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things that have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Another reason our Saviour himself gives of it, ver. 11, 12, "Because to you is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundantly; but whosoever hath not," *i. e.* improves not the talents that he hath, "from him shall be taken away even that he hath."

One thing it may not be amiss to observe, that our Saviour here, in the explication of the first of these parables to his apostles, calls the preaching of the kingdom of the Messiah simply, "The word;" and Luke viii. 21, "The word of God:" from whence St. Luke, in the Acts, often mentions it under the name of the "word," and "the word of God," as we have elsewhere observed. To which I shall here add that of Acts

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viii. 4. "Therefore they that were scattered abroad, went every where preaching the word;" which word, as we have found by examining what they preached all through their history, was nothing but this, that "Jesus was the Messiah:" I mean, this was all the doctrine they proposed to be believed: for what they taught, as well as our Saviour, contained a great deal more; but that concerned practice, and not belief. And therefore our Saviour says, in the place before quoted, Luke viii. 21, "they are my mother and my brethren, who hear the word of God, and do it:" obeying the law of the Messiah their king being no less required, than their believing that Jesus was the Messiah, the king and deliverer that was promised them.

Matt. ix. 13, we have an account again of this preaching; what it was, and how: "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." He acquainted them, that the kingdom of the Messiah was come, and left it to his miracles to instruct and convince them, that he was the Messiah.

Matt. x. when he sent his apostles abroad, their commission to preach we have, ver. 7, 8, in these words: "As ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand: heal the sick," &c. All that they had to preach was, that the kingdom of the Messiah was come.

Whosoever should not receive them, the messengers of these good tidings, nor hearken to their message, incurred a heavier doom than Sodom and Gomorrah, at the day of judgment, ver. 14, 15. But, ver. 32, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, I will confess him before my Father who is in heaven." What this confessing of Christ is, we may see by comparing John xii. 42, with ix. 22. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not *confess him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue." And chap. ix. 22, "These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did *confess that he was* THE MES-

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SIAH, he should be put out of the synagogue." By which places it is evident, that to confess him was to confess that he was the Messiah. From which, give me leave to observe also, (what I have cleared from other places, but cannot be too often remarked, because of the different sense has been put upon that phrase) viz. "that believing on, or in him," (for εἰς αὐτὸν is rendered either way by the English translation) signifies believing that he was the Messiah. For many of the rulers (the text says) "believed on him:" but they durst not confess what they believed, "for fear they should be put out of the synagogue." Now the offence for which it was agreed that any one should be put out of the synagogue was, if he "did confess, that Jesus was the Messiah." Hence we may have a clear understanding of that passage of St. Paul to the Romans, where he tells them positively, what is the faith he preaches, Rom. x. 8, 9, "That is the word of faith which we preach, that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; and that also of 1 John iv. 14, 15, "We have seen, and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world: whosoever shall confess, that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." Where confessing Jesus to be the Son of God is the same with confessing him to be the Messiah; those two expressions being understood amongst the Jews to signify the same thing, as we have shown already.

How calling him the Son of God came to signify that he was the Messiah, would not be hard to show. But it is enough, that it appears plainly, that it was so used, and had that import among the Jews at that time: which if any one desires to have further evidenced to him, he may add Matt. xxvi. 63. John vi. 69, and xi. 27, and xx. 31, to those places before occasionally taken notice of.

As was the apostles' commission, such was their performance; as we read, Luke xi. 6, "They departed and went through the towns, preaching the Gospel, and healing every where." Jesus bid them preach,

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saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." And St. Luke tells us, they went through the towns preaching the Gospel; a word which in Saxon answers well the Greek εὐαγγέλιον, and signifies, as that does, "good news." So that what the inspired writers call the Gospel, is nothing but the good tidings, that the Messiah and his kingdom was come; and so it is to be understood in the New Testament, and so the angel calls it, "good tidings of great joy," Luke ii. 10, bringing the first news of our Saviour's birth. And this seems to be all that his disciples were at that time sent to preach.

So, Luke ix. 59, 60, to him that would have excused his present attendance, because of burying his father; "Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead, but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." When I say, this was all they were to preach, I must be understood, that this was the faith they preached; but with it they joined obedience to the Messiah, whom they received for their king. So likewise, when he sent out the seventy, Luke x., their commission was in these words, ver. 9: "Heal the sick, and say unto them, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

After the return of his apostles to him, he sits down with them on a mountain; and a great multitude being gathered about them, St. Luke tells us, chap. ix. 11, "The people followed him, and he received them, and spake unto them of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing." This was his preaching to this assembly, which consisted of five thousand men, besides women and children: all which great multitude he fed with five loaves and two fishes, Matt. xiv. 21. And what this miracle wrought upon them, St. John tells us, chap. vi. 14, 15, "Then these men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world," *i. e.* the Messiah. For the Messiah was the only person that they expected from God, and this the time they looked for him. And hence John the Baptist, Matt. xi. 3, styles him, "He that should come:" as in other places, "come from

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God," or sent from God," are phrases used for the Messiah.

Here we see our Saviour keep to his usual method of preaching: he speaks to them of the kingdom of God, and does miracles; by which they might understand him to be the Messiah, whose kingdom he spake of. And here we have the reason also, why he so much concealed himself, and forbore to own his being the Messiah. For what the consequence was, of the multitude's but thinking him so, when they were got together, St. John tells us in the very next words: "When Jesus then perceived, that they would come and take him by force to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone." If they were so ready to set him up for their king, only because they gathered from his miracles, that he was the Messiah, whilst he himself said nothing of it: what would not the people have done, and what would not the Scribes and Pharisees have had an opportunity to accuse him of, if he had openly professed himself to have been the Messiah, that king they looked for? But this we have taken notice of already.

From hence going to Capernaum, whither he was followed by a great part of the people, whom he had the day before so miraculously fed; he, upon the occasion of their following him for the loaves, bids them seek for the meat that endureth to eternal life: and thereupon, John vi. 22—69, declares to them his being sent from the Father; and that those who believed in him should be raised to eternal life: but all this very much involved in a mixture of allegorical terms of eating, and of bread; bread of life, which came down from heaven, &c. Which is all comprehended and expounded in these short and plain words, ver. 47 and 54, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, hath everlasting life, and I will raise him up at the last day." The sum of all which discourse is, that he was the Messiah sent from God; and that those who believed him to be so, should be raised from the dead at the last day, to eternal life. These whom he

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spoke to here were of those who, the day before, would by force have made him king; and therefore it is no wonder he should speak to them of himself, and his kingdom and subjects, in obscure and mystical terms; and such as should offend those who looked for nothing but the grandeur of a temporal kingdom in this world, and the protection and prosperity they had promised themselves under it. The hopes of such a kingdom, now that they had found a man that did miracles, and therefore concluded to be the Deliverer they expected, had the day before almost drawn them into an open insurrection, and involved our Saviour in it. This he thought fit to put a stop to; they still following him, it is like, with the same design. And therefore, though he here speaks to them of his kingdom, it was in a way that so plainly balked their expectation, and shocked them, that when they found themselves disappointed of those vain hopes, and that he talked of their eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, that they might have life; the Jews said, ver. 52, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat? And many, even of his disciples, said, It was an hard saying: who can hear it?" And so were scandalized in him, and forsook him, ver. 60, 66. But what the true meaning of this discourse of our Saviour was, the confession of St. Peter, who understood it better, and answered for the rest of the apostles, shows: when Jesus answered him, ver. 67, "Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life:" *i. e.* thou teachest us the way to attain eternal life; and accordingly, "we believe, and are sure, that thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God." This was the eating his flesh and drinking his blood, whereby those who did so had eternal life.

Some time after this, he inquires of his disciples, Mark viii. 27, who the people took him for? They telling him, "for John the Baptist," or one of the old prophets risen from the dead; he asked, What they themselves thought? And here again, Peter answers in these words, Mark viii. 29, "Thou art the Messiah." Luke ix. 20, "The Messiah of God." And, Matt.

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xvi. 16, " Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God:" which expressions, we may hence gather, amount to the same thing. Whereupon our Saviour tells Peter, Matt. xvi. 17, 18, That this was such a truth " as flesh and blood could not reveal to him, but only his Father who was in heaven;" and that this was the foundation, on which he was " to build his church:" by all the parts of which passage it is more than probable, that he had never yet told his apostles in direct words, that he was the Messiah; but that they had gathered it from his life and miracles. For which we may imagine to ourselves this probable reason; because that, if he had familiarly, and in direct terms, talked to his apostles in private, that he was the Messiah, the Prince, of whose kingdom he preached so much in public every where; Judas, whom he knew false and treacherous, would have been readily made use of, to testify against him, in a matter that would have been really criminal to the Roman governor. This, perhaps, may help to clear to us that seemingly abrupt reply of our Saviour to his apostles, John vi. 70, when they confessed him to be the Messiah: I will, for the better explaining of it, set down the passage at large. Peter having said, " We believe and are sure that thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God; Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is διάβολος?" This is a reply, seeming, at first sight, nothing to the purpose; when yet it is sure all our Saviour's discourses were wise and pertinent. It seems therefore to me to carry this sense, to be understood afterwards by the eleven (as that of destroying the temple, and raising it again in three days was) when they should reflect on it, after his being betrayed by Judas: you have confessed, and believe the truth concerning me; I am the Messiah your king: but do not wonder at it, that I have never openly declared it to you; for amongst you twelve, whom I have chosen to be with me, there is one who is an informer, or false accuser, (for so the Greek word signifies, and may, possibly, here be so translated, rather than devil) who, if I had owned myself in plain

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words to have been the "Messiah, the king of Israel," would have betrayed me, and informed against me.

That he was yet cautious of owning himself to his apostles, positively, to be the Messiah, appears farther from the manner wherein he tells Peter, ver. 18, that he will build his church upon that confession of his, that he was the Messiah: I say unto thee, "Thou art Cephas," or a rock, "and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Words too doubtful to be laid hold on against him, as a testimony that he professed himself to be the Messiah; especially if we join with them the following words, ver. 19, "And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and what thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and what thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven." Which being said personally to Peter, render the foregoing words of our Saviour, (wherein he declares the fundamental article of his church to be the believing him to be the Messiah) the more obscure and doubtful; and less liable to be made use of against him; but yet such as might afterwards be understood. And for the same reason, he yet, here again, forbids the apostles to say that he was the Messiah, ver. 20.

From this time (say the evangelists) "Jesus began to show to his disciples," *i. e.* his apostles, (who are often called disciples) "that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders, Chief Priests, and Scribes; and be killed, and be raised again the third day," Matt. xvi. 21. These, though all marks of the Messiah, yet how little understood by the apostles, or suited to their expectation of the Messiah, appears from Peter's rebuking him for it in the following words, Matt. xvi. 22. Peter had twice before owned him to be the Messiah, and yet he cannot here bear that he should suffer, and be put to death, and be raised again. Whereby we may perceive, how little yet Jesus had explained to the apostles what personally concerned himself. They had been a good while witnesses of his life and miracles: and thereby being grown into a belief that he was the Messiah, were, in some degree, prepared

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to receive the particulars that were to fill up that character, and answer the prophecies concerning him. This, from henceforth, he began to open to them (though in a way which the Jews could not form an accusation out of;) the time of the accomplishment of all, in his sufferings, death, and resurrection, now drawing on. For this was in the last year of his life; he being to meet the Jews at Jerusalem but once more at the passover, and then they should have their will upon him: and, therefore, he might now begin to be a little more open concerning himself: though yet so, as to keep himself out of the reach of any accusation, that might appear just or weighty to the Roman deputy.

After his reprimand to Peter, telling him, "That he savoured not the things of God, but of man," Mark viii. 33, he calls the people to him, and prepares those, who would be his disciples, for suffering, telling them, ver. 38, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels:" and then subjoins, Matt. xvi. 27, 28, two great and solemn acts, wherein he would show himself to be the Messiah, the king: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall render to every man according to his works." This is evidently meant of the glorious appearance of his kingdom, when he shall come to judge the world at the last day; described more at large, Matt. xxv. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the THRONE of his glory. Then shall the KING say to them on his right hand," &c.

But what follows in the place above quoted, Matt. xvi. 28, "Verily, verily, there be some standing here, who shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom;" importing that dominion, which some there should see him exercise over the nation of the Jews; was so covered, by being annexed to the preaching, ver. 27, (where he spoke of the manifestation and glory of his kingdom, at the day of

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judgment) that though his plain meaning here in ver. 28 be, that the appearance and visible exercise of his kingly power in his kingdom was so near, that some there should live to see it; yet, if the foregoing words had not cast a shadow over these latter, but they had been left plainly to be understood, as they plainly signified; that he should be a King, and that it was so near, that some there should see him in his kingdom; this might have been laid hold on, and made the matter of a plausible and seemingly just accusation against him, by the Jews before Pilate. This seems to be the reason of our Saviour's inverting here the order of the two solemn manifestations to the world, of his rule and power; thereby perplexing at present his meaning, and securing himself, as was necessary, from the malice of the Jews, which always lay at catch to entrap him, and accuse him to the Roman governor; and would no doubt have been ready to have alleged these words, "Some here shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom," against him, as criminal, had not their meaning been, by the former verse, perplexed, and the sense at that time rendered unintelligible, and not applicable by any of his auditors to a sense that might have been prejudicial to him before Pontius Pilate. For how well the chief of the Jews were disposed towards him, St. Luke tells us, chap. xi. 54, "Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him:" which may be a reason to satisfy us of the seemingly doubtful and obscure way of speaking, used by our Saviour in other places; his circumstances being such, that without such a prudent carriage and reservedness, he could not have gone through the work which he came to do; nor have performed all the parts of it, in a way correspondent to the descriptions given of the Messiah; and which would be afterwards fully understood to belong to him, when he had left the world.

After this, Matt. xvii. 10, &c. he, without saying it in direct words, begins, as it were, to own himself to his apostles to be the Messiah, by assuring them, that as

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the Scribes, according to the prophecy of Malachi, chap. iv. 5, rightly said, that Elias was to usher in the Messiah; so indeed Elias was already come, though the Jews knew him not, and treated him ill: whereby they understood that he spoke to them of John the Baptist," ver. 13. And a little after he somewhat more plainly intimates, that he is the Messiah, Mark ix. 41, in these words: "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to the Messiah." This, as I remember, is the first place where our Saviour ever mentioned the name of Messiah; and the first time that he went so far towards the owning, to any of the Jewish nation, himself to be him.

In his way to Jerusalem, bidding one follow him, Luke ix. 59, who would first bury his father, ver. 60, "Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." And Luke x. 1, sending out the seventy disciples, he says to them, ver. 9, "Heal the sick, and say, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." He had nothing else for these, or for his apostles, or any one, it seems, to preach, but the good news of the coming of the kingdom of the Messiah. And if any city would not receive them, he bids them, ver. 10, "Go into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, do we wipe off against you: notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." This they were to take notice of, as that which they should dearly answer for; viz. that they had not with faith received the good tidings of the kingdom of the Messiah.

After this, his brethren say unto him, John vii. 2, 3, 4, (the feast of tabernacles being near) "Depart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest: for there is no man that does any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If thou do these things, show thyself to the world." Here his brethren, which, the next verse tells us, "did not believe in him," seem to upbraid him with the inconsistency of his carriage; as

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if he designed to be received for the Messiah, and yet was afraid to show himself: to whom he justified his conduct, (mentioned ver. 1) in the following verses, by telling them, "That the world," (meaning the Jews especially) "hated him, because he testified of it, that the works thereof are evil; and that his time was not yet fully come," wherein to quit his reserve, and abandon himself freely to their malice and fury. Therefore, though he "went up unto the feast," it was "not openly, but, as it were, in secret," ver. 10. And here, coming into the temple about the middle of the feast, he justifies his being sent from God; and that he had not done any thing against the law, in curing the man at the pool of Bethesda, John v. 1—16, on the Sabbath-day; which, though done above a year and a half before, they made use of as a pretence to destroy him. But what was the true reason of seeking his life, appears from what we have in this seventh chapter, ver. 25—34, "Then said some of them at Jerusalem, Is not this he whom they seek to kill? But lo, he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. Do the Rulers know indeed, that this is the very MESSIAH? Howbeit, we know this man whence he is; but when the Messiah cometh, no man knoweth whence he is. Then cried Jesus in the temple as he taught, Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me is true, whom ye know not. But I know him; for I am from him, and he hath sent me. Then they sought [an occasion] to take him, but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come. And many of the people believed on him, and said, When the Messiah cometh, will he do more miracles than these, which this man hath done? The Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and Chief Priests sent officers to take him. Then said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go to him that sent me: ye shall seek me, and not find me; and where I am, there you cannot come. Then said the Jews among

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themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him?" Here we find that the great fault in our Saviour, and the great provocation to the Jews, was his being taken for the Messiah; and doing such things as made the people, "believe in him;" *i. e.* believe that he was the Messiah. Here also our Saviour declares, in words very easy to be understood, at least after his resurrection, that he was the Messiah: for, if he were "sent from God," and did his miracles by the Spirit of God, there could be no doubt but he was the Messiah. But yet this declaration was in a way that the Pharisees and priests could not lay hold on, to make an accusation of, to the disturbance of his ministry, or the seizure of his person, how much soever they desired it: for his time was not yet come. The officers they had sent to apprehend him, charmed with his discourse, returned without laying hands on him, ver. 45, 46. And when the Chief Priests asked them, "Why they brought him not?" They answered, "Never man spake like this man." Whereupon the Pharisees reply, "Are ye also deceived? Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him? But this people, who know not the law, are cursed." This shows what was meant by "believing on him," viz. believing that he was the Messiah. For, say they, have any of the rulers, who are skilled in the law, or of the devout and learned Pharisees, acknowledged him to be the Messiah? For as for those, who in the division among the people concerning him, say, "That he is the Messiah," they are ignorant and vile wretches, know nothing of the Scripture, and being accursed, are given up by God, to be deceived by this impostor, and to take him for the Messiah. Therefore, notwithstanding their desire to lay hold on him, he goes on; and ver. 37, 38, "In the last and great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink: he that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." And thus he here again declares himself to be the Messiah; but in the prophetic style, as

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we may see by the next verse of this chapter, and those places in the Old Testament, that these words of our Saviour refer to.

In the next chapter, John viii. all that he says concerning himself, and what they were to believe, tends to this, viz. that he was sent from God his Father; and that, if they did not believe that he was the Messiah, they should die in their sins: but this, in a way, as St. John observes, ver 27, that they did not well understand. But our Saviour himself tells them, ver. 28, "When ye have lift up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he."

Going from them, he cures the man born blind, whom meeting with again, after the Jews had questioned him, and cast him out, John ix. 35—38, "Jesus said to him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe." Here we see this man is pronounced a believer, when all that was proposed to him to believe was, that Jesus was "the Son of God;" which was, as we have already shown, to believe that he was the Messiah.

In the next chapter, John x. 1—21, he declares the laying down of his life both for Jews and Gentiles; but in a parable which they understood not, ver. 6—20.

As he was going to the feast of the dedication, the Pharisees ask him, Luke xvii. 20, "When the kingdom of God," *i. e.* of the Messiah, "should come?" He answers, That it should not come with pomp and observation, and great concourse; but that it was already begun amongst them. If he had stopt here, the sense had been so plain, that they could hardly have mistaken him; or have doubted, but that he meant, that the Messiah was already come, and amongst them; and so might have been prone to infer, that Jesus took upon him to be him. But here, as in the place before taken notice of, subjoining to this future revelation of himself, both in his coming to execute vengeance on the Jews, and in his coming to judgment, mixed

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together, he so involved his sense, that it was not easy to understand him. And therefore the Jews came to him again in the temple, John x. 23, and said, "How long dost thou make us doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered, I told you, and ye *believed* not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye *believed* not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I told you." The *believing* here, which he accuses them of not doing, is plainly their not *believing* him to be the Messiah, as the foregoing words evince; and in the same sense it is evidently meant in the following verses of this chapter.

From hence Jesus going to Bethabara, and thence returning into Bethany; upon Lazarus's death, John xi. 25—27, Jesus said to Martha, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall not die for ever." So I understand ἀποθάνῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, answerable to ζήσεται εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, of the Septuagint, Gen. iii. 22, or John vi. 51, which we read right in our English translation, "live for ever." But whether this saying of our Saviour here can with truth be translated, "He that liveth and believeth in me shall never die," will be apt to be questioned. But to go on, "Believest thou this? She said unto him, Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Messiah, the Son of God, which should come into the world." This she gives as a full answer to our Saviour's demands; this being that faith, which whoever had, wanted no more to make them believers.

We may observe farther, in this same story of the raising of Lazarus, what faith it was our Saviour expected, by what he says, ver. 41, 42, "Father, I thank thee, that thou hast heard me; and I know that thou hearest me always. But because of the people who stand by, I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me." And what the consequence of it was, we may see, ver. 45, "Then many of the Jews who came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him:" which belief was, that he was "sent from the Father;" which, in other words, was,

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that he was the Messiah. That this is the meaning, in the evangelists, of the phrase of "believing on him," we have a demonstration in the following words, ver. 47, 48, "Then gathered the Chief Priests and Pharisees a council, and said, What do we? For this man does many miracles; and if we let him alone, all men will *believe on him.*" Those who here say, all men would *believe on him,* were the Chief Priests and Pharisees, his enemies, who sought his life; and therefore could have no other sense nor thought of this faith in him, which they spake of; but only the believing him to be the Messiah: and that that was their meaning, the adjoining words show: "If we let him alone, all the world will believe on him;" *i. e.* believe him to be the Messiah. "And the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." Which reasoning of theirs was thus grounded: If we stand still, and let the people "believe on him," *i. e.* receive him for the Messiah: they will thereby take him and set him up for their king, and expect deliverance by him; which will draw the Roman arms upon us, to the destruction of us and our country. The Romans could not be thought to be at all concerned in any other belief whatsoever, that the people might have on him. It is therefore plain, that "believing on him," was, by the writers of the Gospel, understood to mean the "believing him to be the Messiah." The Sanhedrim therefore, ver. 53, 54, from that day forth consulted to put him to death. "Jesus therefore walked not yet" (for so the word οὐκέτι signifies, and so I think it ought here to be translated) "boldly," or open-faced, "among the Jews," *i. e.* of Jerusalem. Οὐκέτι cannot well here be translated "no more," because, within a very short time after, he appeared openly at the Passover, and by his miracles and speech declared himself more freely than ever he had done; and all the week before his passion taught daily in the temple, Matt. xx. 17. Mark x. 32. Luke xviii. 31, &c. The meaning of this place seems therefore to be this: that his time being not yet come, he durst not yet show himself openly and confidently before the Scribes and Pharisees, and those of the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, who

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were full of malice against him, and had resolved his death: "But went thence into a country near the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples," to keep himself out of the way until the Passover, "which was nigh at hand," ver. 55. In his return thither, he takes the twelve aside, and tells them beforehand, what should happen to him at Jerusalem, whither they were now going; and that all things that are written by the prophets, concerning the Son of man, should be accomplished; that he should be betrayed to the Chief Priests and Scribes: and that they should condemn him to death, and deliver him to the Gentiles; that he should be mocked, and spit on, and scourged, and put to death; and the third day he should rise again. But St. Luke tells us, chap. xviii. 34, That the apostles "understood none of these things, and this saying was hid from them; neither knew they the things which were spoken." They believed him to be the Son of God, the Messiah sent from the Father; but their notion of the Messiah was the same with the rest of the Jews, that he should be a temporal prince and deliverer: accordingly we see, Mark x. 35, that, even in this their last journey with him to Jerusalem, two of them, James and John, coming to him, and falling at his feet, said, "Grant unto us, that we may sit one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory:" or, as St. Matthew has it, chap. xx. 21, "in thy kingdom." That which distinguished them from the unbelieving Jews was, that they believed Jesus to be the very Messiah, and so received him as their King and Lord.

And now, the hour being come that the Son of man should be glorified, he, without his usual reserve, makes his public entry into Jerusalem, riding on a young ass! "As it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion; behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt." But "these things," says St. John, chap. xii. 16, "his disciples understood not, at the first; but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him." Though the apostles believed him

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to be the Messiah, yet there were many occurrences of his life which they understood not (at the time when they happened) to be foretold of the Messiah; which, after his ascension, they found exactly to quadrate. Thus, according to what was foretold of him, he rode into the city, "all the people crying, Hosanna, blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord." This was so open a declaration of his being the Messiah, that, Luke xix. 39, "Some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples." But he was so far now from stopping them, or disowning this their acknowledgment of his being the Messiah, that he said unto them, "I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out." And again upon the like occasion of their crying, "Hosanna to the Son of David," in the temple, Matt. xxi. 15, 16, "When the Chief Priests and Scribes were sore displeased, and said unto him, Hearest thou what they say? Jesus said unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" And now, ver. 14, 15, He cures the blind and the lame openly in the temple. "And when the Chief Priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, Hosanna, they were enraged." One would not think, that after the multitude of miracles, that our Saviour had now been doing for above three years together, the curing the lame and blind should so much move them. But we must remember, that though his ministry had abounded with miracles, yet the most of them had been done about Galilee, and in parts remote from Jerusalem. There is but one left on record, hitherto done in that city; and that had so ill a reception, that they sought his life for it: as we may read John v. 16. And therefore we hear not of his being at the next Passover, because he was there only privately, as an ordinary Jew: the reason whereof we may read, John vii. 1. "After these things Jesus walked in Galilee; for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him."

Hence we may guess the reason why St. John omitted

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the mention of his being at Jerusalem, at the third Passover after his baptism; probably because he did nothing memorable there. Indeed, when he was at the feast of tabernacles, immediately preceding this his last Passover, he cured the man born blind: but it appears not to have been done in Jerusalem itself, but in the way, as he retired to the mount of Olives; for there seems to have been nobody by, when he did it, but his apostles. Compare ver. 2, with ver. 8, 10, of John ix. This, at least, is remarkable, that neither the cure of this blind man, nor that of the other infirm man, at the Passover, above a twelvemonth before, at Jerusalem, was done in the sight of the Scribes, Pharisees, Chief Priests, or rulers. Nor was it without reason, that in the former part of his ministry, he was cautious of showing himself to them to be the Messiah. But now, that he was come to the last scene of his life, and that the Passover was come, the appointed time, wherein he was to complete the work he came for, in his death and resurrection, he does many things in Jerusalem itself, before the face of the Scribes, Pharisees, and whole body of the Jewish nation, to manifest himself to be the Messiah. And, as St. Luke says, chap. xix. 47, 48, "He taught daily in the temple: but the Chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the chief of the people, sought to destroy him; and could not find what they might do; for all the people were very attentive to hear him." What he taught we are left to guess, by what we have found him constantly preaching elsewhere: but St. Luke tells us, chap. xx. 1, "He taught in the temple, and evangelized;" or, as we translate it, "preached the Gospel:" which, as we have showed, was the making known to them the good news of the kingdom of the Messiah. And this we shall find he did, in what now remains of his history.

In the first discourse of his, which we find upon record, after this, John xii. 20, &c. he foretels his crucifixion, and the belief of all sorts, both Jews and Gentiles, on him after that. Whereupon the people say to him, ver. 34, "We have heard out of the law, that the Messiah abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, that the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son

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of man?" In his answer, he plainly designs himself under the name of Light; which was what he had declared himself to them to be, the last time that they had seen him in Jerusalem. For then, at the feast of tabernacles, but six months before, he tells them in the very place where he now is, viz. in the temple, "I am the Light of the world; whosoever follows me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life;" as we may read, John viii. 12. And ix. 5, he says, "As long as I am in the world, I am the LIGHT of the world." But neither here, nor any where else, does he, even in these four or five last days of his life, (though he knew his hour was come, and was prepared to his death, ver. 27, and scrupled not to manifest himself to the rulers of the Jews to be the Messiah, by doing miracles before them in the temple) ever once in direct words own himself to the Jews to be the Messiah; though by miracles and other ways he did every where make it known unto them, so that it might be understood. This could not be without some reason; and the preservation of his life, which he came now to Jerusalem on purpose to lay down, could not be it. What other could it then be, but the same which had made him use caution in the former part of his ministry; so to conduct himself, that he might do the work which he came for, and in all parts answer the character given of the Messiah, in the law and the prophets? He had fulfilled the time of his ministry; and now taught, and did miracles openly in the temple, before the rulers and the people, not fearing to be seized. But he would not be seized for any thing that might make him a criminal to the government: and therefore he avoided giving those, who, in the division that was about him, inclined towards him, occasion of tumult for his sake: or to the Jews, his enemies, matter of just accusation against him, out of his own mouth, by professing himself to be the Messiah, the King of Israel, in direct words. It was enough, that by words and deeds he declared it so to them, that they could not but understand him; which it is plain they did, Luke xx. 16, 19. Matt. xxi. 45. But yet neither his actions, which were only

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doing of good; nor words, which were mystical and parabolical (as we may see, Matt. xxi. and xxii. and the parallel places of Matthew and Luke;) nor any of his ways of making himself known to be the Messiah; could be brought in testimony, or urged against him, as opposite or dangerous to the government. This preserved him from being condemned as a malefactor; and procured him a testimony from the Roman governor, his judge, that he was an innocent man, sacrificed to the envy of the Jewish nation. So that he avoided saying that he was the Messiah, that to those who would call to mind his life and death, after his resurrection, he might the more clearly appear to be so. It is farther to be remarked, that though he often appeals to the testimony of his miracles, who he is, yet he never tells the Jews, that he was born at Bethlehem, to remove the prejudice that lay against him, whilst he passed for a Galilean, and which was urged as a proof that he was not the Messiah, John vii. 41, 42. The healing of the sick, and doing good miraculously, could be no crime in him, nor accusation against him. But the naming of Bethlehem for his birthplace might have wrought as much upon the mind of Pilate, as it did on Herod's; and have raised a suspicion in Pilate as prejudicial to our Saviour's innocence as Herod's was to the children born there. His pretending to be born at Bethlehem, as it was liable to be explained by the Jews, could not have failed to have met with a sinister interpretation in the Roman governor, and have rendered Jesus suspected of some criminal design against the government. And hence we see, that when Pilate asked him, John xix. 9, "Whence art thou? Jesus gave him no answer."

Whether our Saviour had not an eye to this straitness, this narrow room that was left to his conduct, between the new converts and the captious Jews, when he says, Luke xii. 50, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and πῶς συνέχομαι, how I am straitened, until it be accomplished!" I leave to be considered. "I am come to send fire on the earth," says our Saviour, "and what if it be already kindled?" *i. e.* There begin

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already to be divisions about me, John vii. 12, 43, and ix. 16, and x. 19. And I have not the freedom, the latitude, to declare myself openly to be the Messiah; though I am he, that must not be spoken on, until after my death. My way to my throne is closely hedged in on every side, and much straitened; within which I must keep, until it bring me to my cross in its due time and manner; so that it do not cut short the time, nor cross the end of my ministry.

And therefore, to keep up this inoffensive character, and not to let it come within the reach of accident or calumny, he withdrew, with his apostles, out of the town, every evening; and kept himself retired out of the way, Luke xxi. 37. "And in the daytime he was teaching in the temple, and every night he went out and abode in the mount, that is called the Mount of Olives," that he might avoid all concourse to him in the night, and give no occasion of disturbance, or suspicion of himself, in that great conflux of the whole nation of the Jews, now assembled in Jerusalem at the Passover.

But to return to his preaching in the temple: he bids them, John xii. 36, "To believe in the Light, whilst they have it." And he tells them, ver. 46, "I am the Light come into the world, that every one who believes in me should not remain in darkness;" which believing in him, was the believing him to be the Messiah, as I have elsewhere showed.

The next day, Matt. xxi. he rebukes them for not having believed John the Baptist, who had testified that he was the Messiah. And then, in a parable, declares himself to be the "Son of God," whom they should destroy; and that for it God would take away the kingdom of the Messiah from them, and give it to the Gentiles. That they understood him thus, is plain from Luke xxi. 16. "And when they heard it, they said, God forbid." And ver. 19, "For they knew that he had spoken this parable against them."

Much to the same purpose was his next parable, concerning "the kingdom of heaven," Matt. xxi. 1—10. That the Jews not accepting of the kingdom

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of the Messiah, to whom it was first offered, other should be brought in.

The Scribes and Pharisees and Chief Priests, not able to bear the declaration he made of himself to be the Messiah (by his discourses and miracles before them, ἔμπροσθεν αὐτῶν, John xii. 37, which he had never done before) impatient of his preaching and miracles, and being not able otherwise to stop the increase of his followers, (for, "said the Pharisees among themselves, Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after him,") John xii. 19. So that "the Chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the chief of the people sought to destroy him," the first day of his entrance into Jerusalem, Luke xix. 47. The next day, again, they were intent upon the same thing, Mark xi. 17, 18, "And he taught in the temple; and the Scribes and the Chief Priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him; for they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine."

The next day but one, upon his telling them the kingdom of the Messiah should be taken from them, "The Chief Priests and Scribes sought to lay hands on him the same hour, and they feared the people," Luke xx. 19. If they had so great a desire to lay hold on him, why did they not? They were the Chief Priests and the rulers, the men of power. The reason St. Luke plainly tells us in the next verse: "And they watched him, and sent forth spies, who should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words; that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor." They wanted matter of accusation against him, to the power they were under; that they watched for, and that they would have been glad of, if they could have "entangled him in his talk;" as St. Matthew expresses it, chap. xxii. 15. If they could have laid hold on any word, that had dropt from him, that they might have rendered him guilty, or suspected to the Roman governor; that would have served their turn, to have laid hold upon him, with hopes to destroy him. For their power not answering their malice, they could not put him to death by their

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own authority, without the permission and assistance of the governor; as they confess, John xviii. 31, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." This made them so earnest for a declaration in direct words, from his own mouth, that he was the Messiah. It was not that they would more have believed in him, for such a declaration of himself, than they did for his miracles, or other ways of making himself known, which it appears they understood well enough. But they wanted plain direct words, such as might support an accusation, and be of weight before an heathen judge. This was the reason why they pressed him to speak out, John x. 24, "Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, How long dost thou hold us in suspense? "If thou be the Messiah, tell us *plainly*, παῤῥησία;" *i. e.* in direct words: for that St. John uses it in that sense we may see, chap. xi. 11—14. "Jesus saith to them, Lazarus sleepeth. His disciples said, If he sleeps, he shall do well. Howbeit, Jesus spake of his death; but they thought he had spoken of taking rest in sleep. Then said Jesus to them plainly, παῤῥησία, Lazarus is dead." Here we see what is meant by παῤῥησία, *plain*, direct words, such as express the same thing without a figure; and so they would have had Jesus pronounce himself to be the Messiah. And the same thing they press again, Matt. xxvi. 63, the High Priest adjuring him by the living God, to tell them whether he were the Messiah, the Son of God; as we shall have occasion to take notice by-and-by.

This we may observe in the whole management of their design against his life. It turned upon this, that they wanted and wished for a declaration from him in direct words, that he was the Messiah; something from his own mouth that might offend the Roman power, and render him criminal to Pilate. In the 21st verse of this twentieth of Luke, "They asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly; neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly. Is it lawful for us to give tribute to Cæsar, or no?" By this captious question they hoped to catch him, which way soever he answered.

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For if he had said, they ought to pay tribute to Cæsar, it would be plain he allowed their subjection to the Romans; and so in effect disowned himself to be their King and Deliverer; whereby he would have contradicted what his carriage and doctrine seemed to aim at, the opinion that was spread amongst the people, that he was the Messiah. This would have quashed the hopes, and destroyed the faith of those that believed on him; and have turned the ears and hearts of the people from him. If on the other side he answered, No, it is not lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar; they had had out of his own mouth wherewithal to condemn him before Pontius Pilate. But St. Luke tells us, ver. 23, "He perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?" *i. e.* Why do ye lay snares for me? "Ye hypocrites, show me the tribute-money;" so it is, Matt. xxii. 19, "Whose image and inscription has it? They said, Cæsar's." He said unto them, "Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." By the wisdom and caution of which unexpected answer, he defeated their whole design: "And they could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace." Luke xx. 26. "And leaving him, they departed." Matt. xxii. 22.

He having, by this reply, (and what he answered to the Sadducees, concerning the resurrection, and to the lawyer, about the first commandment, Mark xii.) answered so little to their satisfaction or advantage, they durst ask him no more questions, any of them. And now, their mouths being stopped, he himself begins to question them about the Messiah; asking the Pharisees, Matt. xxii. 41, "What think ye of the Messiah? whose son is he? They say unto him, The Son of David." Wherein though they answered right, yet he shows them in the following words, that, however they pretended to be studiers and teachers of the law, yet they understood not clearly the Scriptures concerning the Messiah; and thereupon he sharply rebukes their hypocrisy, vanity, pride, malice, covetousness, and ignorance; and particularly tells them, ver. 13, "Ye shut up the kingdom

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of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, nor suffer ye them that are entering, to go in." Whereby he plainly declares to them, that the Messiah was come, and his kingdom begun; but that they refused to believe in him themselves, and did all they could to hinder others from believing in him, as is manifest throughout the New Testament; the history whereof sufficiently explains what is meant here by "the kingdom of heaven," which the Scribes and Pharisees would neither go into themselves, nor suffer others to enter into. And they could not choose but understand him, though he named not himself in the case.

Provoked anew by his rebukes, they get presently to council, Matt. xxvi. 3, 4. "Then assembled together the Chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the High Priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there should be an uproar among the people. For they feared the people," says Luke, chap. xxii. 2.

Having in the night got Jesus into their hands, by the treachery of Judas, they presently led him away bound to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Annas, probably, having examined him, and getting nothing out of him for his purpose, sends him away to Caiaphas, John xviii. 24, where the Chief Priests, the Scribes, and the elders were assembled, Matt. xxvi. 57. John xviii. 18, 19. "The High Priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world: I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort, and in secret have I said nothing." A proof that he had not in private, to his disciples, declared himself in express words to be the Messiah, the Prince. But he goes on: "Why askest thou me?" Ask Judas, who has been always with me. "Ask them who heard me, what I have said unto them; behold, they know what I said." Our Saviour, we see here, warily declines, for the reasons above-mentioned, all discourse of his doctrine. The Sanhedrim, Matt. xxvi. 59, "sought false witness against him:" but when "they

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found none that were sufficient," or came up to the point they desired, which was to have something against him to take away his life, (for so, I think, the words ἵνα and ἵνη mean, Mark xiv. 56, 59,) they try again what they can get out of him himself, concerning his being the Messiah; which if he owned in express words, they thought they should have enough against him at the tribunal of the Roman governor, to make him "læsæ majestatis reum," and so take away his life. They therefore say to him, Luke xxii. 67, "If thou be the Messiah, tell us." Nay, as St. Matthew hath it, the High Priest adjures him by the living God, to tell him whether he were the Messiah. To which our Saviour replies, "If I tell you, ye will not believe; and if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go." If I tell you, and prove to you, by the testimony given me from Heaven, and by the works that I have done among you, you will not believe in me, that I am the Messiah. Or if I should ask where the Messiah is to be born, and what state he should come in; how he should appear, and other things that you think in me are not reconcileable with the Messiah; you will not answer me, nor let me go, as one that has no pretence to be the Messiah, and you are not afraid should be received for such. But yet I tell you, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God," ver. 70. "Then say they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am." By which discourse with them, related at large here by St. Luke, it is plain, that the answer of our Saviour, set down by St. Matthew, chap. xxvi. 64, in these words, "Thou hast said;" and by St. Mark, chap. xiv. 62, in these, "I am;" is an answer only to this question, "Art thou then the Son of God?" And not to that other, "Art thou the Messiah?" which preceded, and he had answered to before; though Matthew and Mark, contracting the story, set them down together, as if making but one question, omitting all the intervening discourse; whereas it is plain out of St. Luke, that they were two distinct questions, to which Jesus gave two distinct answers. In the first whereof he, according to his usual caution, declined saying in plain

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express words, that he was the Messiah; though in the latter he owned himself to be "the Son of God." Which, though they, being Jews, understood to signify the Messiah, yet he knew could be no legal or weighty accusation against him, before a heathen; and so it proved. For upon his answering to their question, "Art thou then the Son of God? Ye say that I am;" they cry out, Luke xxii. 71, "What need we any further witness? For we ourselves have heard out of his own mouth. And so, thinking they had enough against him, they hurry him away to Pilate. Pilate asking them, John xviii. 29—32, "What accusation bring you against this man? They answered and said, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Then said Pilate unto them, "Take ye him, and judge him according to your law." But this would not serve their turn, who aimed at his life, and would be satisfied with nothing else. "The Jews therefore said unto him, It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." And this was also, "That the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying what death he should die." Pursuing therefore their design of making him appear, to Pontius Pilate, guilty of treason against Cæsar, Luke xxiii. 2, "They began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar; saying, that he himself is the Messiah, the King;" all which were inferences of theirs, from his saying, he was "the Son of God;" which Pontius Pilate finding, (for it is consonant that he examined them to the precise words he had said) their accusation had no weight with him. However, the name of king being suggested against Jesus, he thought himself concerned to search it to the bottom, John xviii. 33—37. "Then Pilate entered again into the judgment-hall, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews, Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the Chief Priests have delivered thee unto me: What hast

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thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now my kingdom is not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth: every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." In this dialogue between our Saviour and Pilate, we may observe, 1. That being asked, Whether he were "The King of the Jews?" he answered so, that though he deny it not, yet he avoids giving the least umbrage, that he had any design upon the government. For, though he allows himself to be a king, yet, to obviate any suspicion, he tells Pilate, "his kingdom is not of this world;" and evidences it by this, that if he had pretended to any title to that country, his followers, which were not a few, and were forward enough to believe him their king, would have fought for him; if he had had a mind to set himself up by force, or his kingdom were so to be erected. "But my kingdom," says he, "is not from hence," is not of this fashion, or of this place.

2. Pilate being, by his words and circumstances, satisfied that he laid no claim to his province, or meant any disturbance of the government; was yet a little surprised to hear a man in that poor garb, without retinue, or so much as a servant, or a friend, own himself to be a king; and therefore asks him, with some kind of wonder, "Art thou a king then?"

3. That our Saviour declares, that his great business in the world was, to testify and make good this great truth, that he was a king; *i. e.* in other words, that he was the Messiah.

4. That whoever were followers of truth, and got into the way of truth and happiness, received this doctrine concerning him, viz. That he was the Messiah, their King.

Pilate being thus satisfied, that he neither meant, nor could there arise, any harm from his pretence, what-

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ever it was, to be a king; tells the Jews, ver. 31, "I find no fault in this man." But the Jews were the more fierce, Luke xxiii. 5, saying, "He stirreth up the people to sedition, by his preaching through all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place." And then Pilate, learning that he was of Galilee, Herod's jurisdiction, sent him to Herod; to whom also "the Chief Priests and Scribes," ver. 10, "vehemently accused him." Herod, finding all their accusations either false or frivolous, thought our Saviour a bare object of contempt; and so, turning him only into ridicule, sent him back to Pilate: who, calling unto him the Chief Priests, and the rulers, and the people, ver. 14, "Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people; and behold, I having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching these things whereof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him: and lo, nothing worthy of death is done by him." And therefore he would have released him: "For he knew the Chief Priests had delivered him through envy," Mark xv. 10. And when they demanded Barabbas to be released, but as for Jesus, cried, "Crucify him;" Luke xxiii. 22, "Pilate said unto them the third time, Why? What evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him; I will, therefore, chastise him, and let him go."

We may observe, in all this whole prosecution of the Jews, that they would fain have got it out of Jesus's own mouth, in express words, that he was the Messiah: which not being able to do, with all their art and endeavour; all the rest that they could allege against him not amounting to a proof before Pilate, that he claimed to be king of the Jews; or that he had caused or done any thing towards a mutiny or insurrection among the people (for upon these two, as we see, their whole charge turned); Pilate again and again pronounced him innocent: for so he did a fourth, and a fifth time; bringing him out to them, after he had whipped him, John xix. 4, 6. And after all, "When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult

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was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just man: see you to it:" Matt. xxvii. 24. Which gives us a clear reason of the cautious and wary conduct of our Saviour, in not declaring himself, in the whole course of his ministry, so much as to his disciples; much less to the multitude, or to the rulers of the Jews, in express words, to be the Messiah the King; and why he kept himself always in prophetical, or parabolical terms, (he and his disciples preaching only the kingdom of God, *i. e.* of the Messiah, to be come); and left to his miracles to declare who he was; though this was the truth, which he came into the world, as he says himself, John xviii. 37, to testify, and which his disciples were to believe.

When Pilate, satisfied of his innocence, would have released him; and the Jews persisted to cry out, "Crucify him, crucify him," John xix. 6, "Pilate says to them, Take ye him yourselves, and crucify him: for I do not find any fault in him." The Jews then, since they could not make him a state criminal, by alleging his saying, that he was "the Son of God," say, by their law it was a capital crime, ver. 7. "The Jews answered to Pilate, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die; because he made himself the Son of God," *i. e.* because, by saying "he is the Son of God," he has made himself the Messiah, the prophet, which was to come. For we find no other law but that against false prophets, Deut. xviii. 20, whereby "making himself the Son of God" deserved death. After this, Pilate was the more desirous to release him, ver. 12, 13, "But the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend; whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." Here we see the stress of their charge against Jesus; whereby they hoped to take away his life, viz. that he "made himself king." We see also upon what they grounded this accusation, viz. because he had owned himself to be "the Son of God." For he had, in their hearing, never made or professed himself to be a king. We see here, likewise, the reason why they were so de-

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sirous to draw from his own mouth a confession in express words, that he was the Messiah; viz. that they might have what might be a clear proof that he did so. And, last of all, we see reason why, though in expressions which they understood, he owned himself to them to be the Messiah; yet he avoided declaring it to them, in such words as might look criminal at Pilate's tribunal. He owned himself to be the Messiah plainly, to the understanding of the Jews; but in ways that could not, to the understanding of Pilate, make it appear that he had laid claim to the kingdom of Judea; or went about to make himself king of that country. But whether his saying, that he was "the Son of God," was criminal by their law, that Pilate troubled not himself about.

He that considers what Tacitus, Suetonius, Seneca de Benef. l. 3, c. 26, say of Tiberius and his reign, will find how necessary it was for our Saviour, if he would not die as a criminal and a traitor, to take great heed to his words and actions; that he did or said not any thing that might be offensive, or give the least umbrage to the Roman government. It behoved an innocent man, who was taken notice of, for something extraordinary in him, to be very wary under a jealous and cruel prince, who encouraged informations, and filled his reign with executions for treason; under whom, words spoken innocently, or in jest, if they could be misconstrued, were made treason, and prosecuted with a rigour, that made it always the same thing to be accused and condemned. And therefore we see, that when the Jews told Pilate, John xix. 12, that he should not be a friend to Cæsar, if he let Jesus go (for that whoever made himself king, was a rebel against Cæsar): he asks them no more, whether they would take Barabbas, and spare Jesus; but (though against his conscience) gives him up to death, to secure his own head.

One thing more there is, that gives us light into this wise and necessarily cautious management of himself, which manifestly agrees with it, and makes a part of it: and that is, the choice of his apostles; exactly suited to the design and foresight of the necessity of keeping the declaration of the kingdom of the Messiah, which was

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now expected, within certain general terms, during his ministry. It was not fit to open himself too plainly or forwardly to the heady Jews, that he himself was the Messiah: that was to be left to the observation of those, who would attend to the purity of his life, the testimony of his miracles, and the conformity of all with the predictions concerning him: by these marks, those he lived amongst were to find it out, without an express promulgation that he was the Messiah, until after his death. His kingdom was to be opened to them by degrees, as well to prepare them to receive it, as to enable him to be long enough amongst them, to perform what was the work of the Messiah to be done; and fulfil all those several parts of what was foretold of him in the Old Testament, and we see applied to him in the New.

The Jews had no other thoughts of their Messiah, but of a mighty temporal prince, that should raise their nation into an higher degree of power, dominion, and prosperity, than ever it had enjoyed. They were filled with the expectation of a glorious earthly kingdom. It was not, therefore, for a poor man, the son of a carpenter, and (as they thought) born in Galilee, to pretend to it. None of the Jews, no, not his disciples, could have borne this, if he had expressly avowed this at first, and began his preaching and the opening of his kingdom this way, especially if he had added to it, that in a year or two he should die an ignominious death upon the cross. They are therefore prepared for the truth by degrees. First, John the Baptist tells them, "The kingdom of God" (a name by which the Jews called the kingdom of the Messiah) "is at hand." Then our Saviour comes, and he tells them "of the kingdom of God;" sometimes that it is at hand, and upon some occasions, that it is come; but says, in his public preaching, little or nothing of himself. Then come the apostles and evangelists after his death, and they, in express words, teach what his birth, life, and doctrine had done before, and had prepared the well-disposed to receive, viz. That "Jesus is the Messiah."

To this design and method of publishing the Gospel

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was the choice of the apostles exactly adjusted; a company of poor, ignorant, illiterate men; who, as Christ himself tells us, Matt. xi. 25, and Luke x. 21, were not of the "wise and prudent" men of the world: they were, in that respect, but mere children. These, convinced by the miracles they saw him daily do, and the unblamable life he led, might be disposed to believe him to be the Messiah: and though they, with others, expected a temporal kingdom on earth, might yet rest satisfied in the truth of their Master, (who had honoured them with being near his person) that it would come, without being too inquisitive after the time, manner, or seat of his kingdom, as men of letters, more studied in their rabbins, or men of business, more versed in the world, would have been forward to have been. Men, great or wise in knowledge, or ways of the world, would hardly have been kept from prying more narrowly into his design and conduct; or from questioning him about the ways and measures he would take, for ascending the throne; and what means were to be used towards it, and when they should in earnest set about it. Abler men, of higher births or thoughts, would hardly have been hindered from whispering, at least to their friends and relations, that their Master was the Messiah; and that, though he concealed himself to a fit opportunity, and until things were ripe for it, yet they should, ere long, see him break out of his obscurity, cast off the cloud, and declare himself, as he was, King of Israel. But the ignorance and lowness of these good, poor men, made them of another temper. They went along, in an implicit trust on him, punctually keeping to his commands, and not exceeding his commission. When he sent them to preach the Gospel, he bid them preach "the kingdom of God" to be at hand; and that they did, without being more particular than he had ordered, or mixing their own prudence with his commands, to promote the kingdom of the Messiah. They preached it, without giving, or so much as intimating that their Master was he: which men of another condition, and an higher education, would scarce have forborn to have done. When he asked them, who they

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thought him to be; and Peter answered, "The Messiah, the Son of God," Matt. xvi. 16, he plainly shows by the following words, that he himself had not told them so; and at the same time, ver 20, forbids them to tell this their opinion of him to any body. How obedient they were to him in this, we may not only conclude from the silence of the evangelists concerning any such thing, published by them any where before his death; but from the exact obedience three of them paid to a like command of his. He takes Peter, James, and John, into a mountain; and there Moses and Elias coming to him, he is transfigured before them, Matt. xvii. 9, He charges them, saying, "See that ye tell no man what ye have seen, until the Son of man shall be risen from the dead." And St. Luke tells us, what punctual observers they were of his orders in this case, chap. ix. 36, "They kept it close, and told no man, in those days, any of those things which they had seen."

Whether twelve other men, of quicker parts, and of a station or breeding, which might have given them any opinion of themselves, or their own abilities, would have been so easily kept from meddling, beyond just what was prescribed them, in a matter they had so much interest in; and have said nothing of what they might, in human prudence, have thought would have contributed to their master's reputation, and made way for his advancement to his kingdom; I leave to be considered. And it may suggest matter of meditation, whether St. Paul was not for this reason, by his learning, parts, and warmer temper, better fitted for an apostle after, than during our Saviour's ministry: and therefore, though a chosen vessel, was not by the divine wisdom called, until after Christ's resurrection.

I offer this only as a subject of magnifying the admirable contrivance of the divine wisdom, in the whole work of our redemption, as far as we are able to trace it, by the footsteps which God hath made visible to human reason. For though it be as easy to omnipotent power to do all things by an immediate over-ruling will, and so to make any instruments work, even con-

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trary to their nature, in subserviency to his ends; yet his wisdom is not usually at the expense of miracles, (if I may so say) but only in cases that require them, for the evidencing of some revelation or mission to be from him. He does constantly (unless where the confirmation of some truth requires it otherwise) bring about his purposes by means operating according to their natures. If it were not so, the course and evidence of things would be confounded, miracles would lose their name and force, and there could be no distinction between natural and supernatural.

There had been no room left to see and admire the wisdom, as well as innocence of our Saviour, if he had rashly every where exposed himself to the fury of the Jews, and had always been preserved by a miraculous suspension of their malice, or a miraculous rescuing him out of their hands. It was enough for him once to escape from the men of Nazareth, who were going to throw him down a precipice, for him never to preach to them again. Our Saviour had multitudes that followed him for the loaves; who barely seeing the miracles that he did, would have made him king. If to the miracles he did, he had openly added, in express words, that he was the Messiah, and the king they expected to deliver them, he would have had more followers, and warmer in the cause, and readier to set him up at the head of a tumult. These indeed God, by a miraculous influence, might have hindered from any such attempt: but then posterity could not have believed, that the nation of the Jews did, at that time, expect the Messiah, their king and deliverer; or that Jesus, who declared himself to be that king and deliverer, showed any miracles amongst them, to convince them of it; or did any thing worthy to make him be credited or received. If he had gone about preaching to the multitude, which he drew after him, that he was the "Messiah, the king of Israel," and this had been evidenced to Pilate; God could indeed, by a supernatural influence upon his mind, have made Pilate pronounce him innocent, and not condemn him as a malefactor, who had openly, for three years together, preached

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sedition to the people, and endeavoured to persuade them, that he was "the Messiah, their king," of the royal blood of David, come to deliver them. But then I ask, Whether posterity would not either have suspected the story, or that some art had been used to gain that testimony from Pilate? Because he could not (for nothing) have been so favourable to Jesus, as to be willing to release so turbulent and seditious a man; to declare him innocent, and to cast the blame and guilt of his death, as unjust, upon the envy of the Jews.

But now, the malice of the Chief Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees; the headiness of the mob, animated with hopes, and raised with miracles; Judas's treachery, and Pilate's care of his government, and of the peace of his province, all working naturally as they should; Jesus, by the admirable wariness of his carriage, and an extraordinary wisdom, visible in his whole conduct; weathers all these difficulties, does the work he comes for, uninterruptedly goes about preaching his full appointed time, sufficiently manifests himself to be the Messiah, in all the particulars the Scriptures had foretold of him; and, when his hour is come, suffers death: but is acknowledged, both by Judas that betrayed, and Pilate that condemned him, to die innocent. For, to use his own words, Luke xxiv. 46, "Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer." And of his whole conduct we have a reason and clear resolution in those words to St. Peter, Matt. xxvi. 53, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scripture be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

Having this clew to guide us, let us now observe, how our Saviour's preaching and conduct comported with it in the last scene of his life. How cautious he had been in the former part of his ministry, we have already observed. We never find him to use the name of the Messiah but once, until he now came to Jerusalem, this last Passover. Before this, his preaching and miracles were less at Jerusalem, (where he used to make but very short stays) than any where else. But now he comes six days

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before the feast, and is every day in the temple teaching; and there publicly heals the blind and the lame, in the presence of the Scribes, Pharisees, and Chief Priests. The time of his ministry drawing to an end, and his hour coming, he cared not how much the Chief Priests, elders, rulers, and the Sanhedrim were provoked against him by his doctrine and miracles: he was as open and bold in his preaching, and doing the works of the Messiah now at Jerusalem, and in the sight of the rulers, and of all the people, as he had been before cautious and reserved there, and careful to be little taken notice of in that place, and not to come in their way more than needs. All that he now took care of was, not what they should think of him, or design against him (for he knew they would seize him), but to say or do nothing that might be a just matter of accusation against him, or render him criminal to the governor. But, as for the grandees of the Jewish nation, he spares them not, but sharply now reprehends their miscarriages publicly in the temple; where he calls them, more than once, "hypocrites," as is to be seen, Matt. xxiii. And concludes all with no softer a compellation than "serpents," and "a generation of vipers."

After this severe reproof of the Scribes and Pharisees, being retired with his disciples into the "Mount of Olives," over-against the temple, and there foretelling the destruction of it; his disciples ask him, Matt. xxiv. 3, &c. "When it should be, and what should be the sign of his coming?" He says to them, "Take heed that no man deceive you: for many shall come in my name," (*i. e.* taking on them the name and dignity of the Messiah, which is only mine) "saying, I am the Messiah, and shall deceive many." But be not you by them misled, nor by persecution driven away from this fundamental truth, that I am the Messiah; "for many shall be scandalized," and apostatize; "but he that endures to the end, the same shall be saved: and this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world;" *i. e.* the good news of me, the Messiah, and my kingdom, shall be spread through the world. This was the great and only point of belief they were warned to stick to; and this is inculcated again, ver. 23—26,

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and Mark xiii. 21—23, with this emphatical application to them, in both these evangelists, "Behold, I have told you beforehand: remember, you are forewarned."

This was in answer to the apostle's inquiry, concerning his "coming, and the end of the world," ver. 3. For so we translate τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος. We must understand the disciples here to put their question, according to the notion and way of speaking of the Jews. For they had two worlds, as we translate it, ὁ νῦν αἰὼν, καὶ ὁ μέλλων αἰών; "the present world," and the "world to come." The kingdom of God, as they called it, or the time of the Messiah, they called ὁ μέλλων αἰών, "the world to come," which they believed was to put an end to "this world;" and that then the just should be raised from the dead, to enjoy in that "new world" a happy eternity, with those of the Jewish nation, who should be then living.

These two things, viz. the visible and powerful appearance of his kingdom, and the end of the world, being confounded in the apostles' question, our Saviour does not separate them, nor distinctly reply to them apart; but, leaving the inquirers in the common opinion, answers at once concerning his coming to take vengeance on the Jewish nation, and put an end to their church worship and commonwealth; which was their ὁ νῦν αἰὼν, "present world," which they counted should last till the Messiah came; and so it did, and then had an end put to it. And to this he joins his last coming to judgment, in the glory of his Father, to put a final end to this world, and all the dispensation belonging to the posterity of Adam upon earth. This joining them together, made his answer obscure, and hard to be understood by them then; nor was it safe for him to speak plainer of his kingdom, and the destruction of Jerusalem; unless he had a mind to be accused for having designs against the government. For Judas was amongst them: and whether no other but his apostles were comprehended under the name of "his disciples," who were with him at this time, one cannot determine. Our Saviour, therefore, speaks of his kingdom in no other style, but that which he had all along hitherto

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used, viz. "the kingdom of God," Luke xxi. 31, "When you see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." And continuing on his discourse with them, he has the same expression, Matt. xxv. 1, "Then the kingdom of heaven shall be like unto ten virgins." At the end of the following parable of the talents, he adds, ver. 31, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory. And before him shall be gathered all the nations. And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left. Then shall the KING say," &c. Here he describes to his disciples the appearance of his kingdom, wherein he will show himself a king in glory upon his throne; but this in such a way, and so remote, and so unintelligible to an heathen magistrate; that, if it had been alleged against him, it would have seemed rather the dream of a crazy brain, than the contrivance of an ambitious or dangerous man, designing against the government: the way of expressing what he meant, being in the prophetic style, which is seldom so plain as to be understood till accomplished. It is plain, that his disciples themselves comprehended not what kingdom he here spoke of, from their question to him after his resurrection, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom unto Israel?"

Having finished these discourses, he takes order for the Passover, and eats it with his disciples; and at supper tells them, that one of them should betray him; and adds, John xiii. 19, "I tell it you now, before it come, that when it is come to pass, you may know that I am." He does not say out, "the Messiah;" Judas should not have that to say against him, if he would; though that be the sense in which he uses this expression, ἐγὼ εἰμι, "I am," more than once. And that this is the meaning of it, is clear from Mark xii. 6. Luke xxi. 8. In both which evangelists the words are, "For many shall come in my name, saying, ἐγὼ εἰμι, I am:" the meaning whereof we shall find explained in the parallel place of St. Matthew, chap. xxiv. 5, "For

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many shall come in my name, saying, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ Χριστός, "I am the Messiah." Here, in this place of John xiii. Jesus foretels what should happen to him, viz. that he should he betrayed by Judas; adding this prediction to the many other particulars of his death and suffering, which he had at other times foretold to them. And here he tells them the reason of these his predictions, viz. that afterwards they might be a confirmation to their faith. And what was it that he would have them believe, and be confirmed in the belief of? Nothing but this, ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ Χριστός, "that he was the Messiah." The same reason he gives, John xiv. 28, "You have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you: and now I have told you, before it comes to pass, that when it comes to pass, ye might believe.

When Judas had left them, and was gone out, he talks a little freer to them of his glory and his kingdom than ever he had done before. For now he speaks plainly of himself, and of his kingdom, John xiii. 31, "Therefore when he [Judas] was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is also glorified in him. And, if God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." And Luke xxii. 29, "And I will appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; that ye may eat and drink with me at my table, in my kingdom." Though he has every where, all along through his ministry, preached the "Gospel of the kingdom," and nothing else but that and repentance, and the duties of a good life: yet it has been always "the kingdom of God," and "the kingdom of heaven:" and I do not remember, that any where, till now, he uses any such expression as "my kingdom." But here now he speaks in the first person, "I will appoint you a kingdom," and, "in my kingdom:" and this we see is only to the eleven, now Judas was gone from them.

With these eleven, whom he was just now leaving, he has a long discourse, to comfort them for the loss of him; and to prepare them for the persecution of the

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world, and to exhort them to keep his commandments, and to love one another. And here one may expect all the articles of faith should be laid down plainly, if any thing else were required of them to believe, but what he had taught them, and they believed already, viz. "That he was the Messiah." John xiv. 1, "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." Ver. 29. "I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe." It is believing on him without any thing else. John xvi. 31, "Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?" This was in answer to their profession, ver. 30, "Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: by this we believe that thou camest forth from God."

John xvii. 20, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." All that is spoke of believing, in this his last sermon to them, is only "believing on him," or believing that "he came from God;" which was no other than believing him to be the Messiah.

Indeed, John xiv. 9, our Saviour tells Philip, "He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father." And adds, ver. 10, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doth the works." Which being in answer to Philip's words, ver. 9, "Show us the Father," seem to import thus much: "No man hath seen God at any time;" he is known only by his works. And that he is my Father, and I the Son of God, *i. e.* the Messiah, you may know by the works I have done; which it is impossible I could do of myself, but by the union I have with God my Father. For that by being "in God," and "God in him," he signifies such an union with God, that God operates in and by him, appears not only by the words above cited out of ver. 10, (which can scarce otherwise be made coherent sense) but also from the same phrase, used again by our Saviour presently after, ver. 20, "At that day," viz. after his resurrection, when they should see him again, "you shall

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know that I am in the Father, and you in me, and I in you;" *i. e.* by the works, that I shall enable you to do, through a power I have received from the Father: which whosoever sees me do, must acknowledge the Father to be in me; and whosoever sees you do, must acknowledge me to be in you. And therefore he says, ver. 12, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, because I go unto my Father." Though I go away, yet I shall be in you, who believe in me; and ye shall be enabled to do miracles also, for the carrying on of my kingdom, as I have done; that it may be manifested to others, that you are sent by me, as I have evidenced to you, that I am sent by the Father. And hence it is that he says in the immediately preceding ver. 11, "Believe me, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me; if not, believe me for the sake of the works themselves." Let the works that I have done convince you, that I am sent by the Father; that he is with me, and that I do nothing but by his will; and by virtue of the union I have with him; and that consequently I am the Messiah, who am anointed, sanctified, and separated by the Father, to the work for which he sent me.

To confirm them in this faith, and to enable them to do such works as he had done, he promises them the Holy Ghost, John xiv. 25, 26. "These things I have said unto you, being yet present with you." But when I am gone, "The Holy Ghost, the Paraclet," (which may signify Monitor, as well as Comforter, or Advocate) "which the Father shall send you in my name, he shall show you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things which I have said." So that, considering all that I have said, and laying it together, and comparing it with what you shall see come to pass; you may be more abundantly assured, that I am the Messiah; and fully comprehend, that I have done and suffered all things foretold of the Messiah, and that were to be accomplished and fulfilled by him, according to the Scriptures. But be not filled with grief, that I leave you, John xvi. 7, "It is expedient for you, that I go away; for if I go not away, the Paraclet will not

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come unto you." One reason why, if he went not away, the Holy Ghost could not come, we may gather from what has been observed, concerning the prudent and wary carriage of our Saviour all through his ministry, that he might not incur death with the least suspicion of a malefactor. And therefore, though his disciples believed him to be the Messiah, yet they neither understood it so well, nor were so well confirmed in the belief of it, as after that, he being crucified and risen again, they had received the Holy Ghost; and with the gifts of the Holy Spirit, a fuller and clearer evidence and knowledge that he was the Messiah. They then were enlightened to see how his kingdom was such as the Scriptures foretold; though not such as they, till then, had expected. And now this knowledge and assurance, received from the Holy Ghost, was of use to them after his resurrection; when they could now boldly go about, and openly preach, as they did, that Jesus was the Messiah; confirming that doctrine by the miracles which the Holy Ghost empowered them to do. But till he was dead and gone, they could not do this. Their going about openly preaching, as they did after his resurrection, that Jesus was the Messiah, and doing miracles every where, to make it good, would not have consisted with that character of humility, peace, and innocence, which the Messiah was to sustain, if they had done it before his crucifixion. For this would have drawn upon him the condemnation of a malefactor, either as a stirrer of sedition against the public peace, or as a pretender to the kingdom of Israel. Hence we see, that they, who before his death preached only the "Gospel of the kingdom;" that "the kingdom of God was at hand;" as soon as they had received the Holy Ghost, after his resurrection, changed their style, and every where in express words declare, that Jesus is the Messiah, that King which was to come. This the following words here in St. John xvi. 8—14, confirm; where he goes on to tell them, "And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin; because they believed not on me." Your preaching then, accompanied with miracles, by the assistance of the Holy Ghost, shall be a

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conviction to the world, that the Jews sinned in not believing me to be the Messiah. "Of righteousness," or justice; "because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." By the same preaching and miracles you shall confirm the doctrine of my ascension; and thereby convince the world, that I was that just one, who am, therefore, ascended to the Father into heaven, where no unjust person shall enter. "Of judgment; because the prince of this world is judged." And by the same assistance of the Holy Ghost ye shall convince the world, that the devil is judged or condemned by your casting of him out, and destroying his kingdom, and his worship, wherever you preach. Our Saviour adds, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now." They were yet so full of a temporal kingdom, that they could not bear the discovery of what kind of kingdom his was, nor what a king he was to be: and therefore he leaves them to the coming of the Holy Ghost, for a farther and fuller discovery of himself, and the kingdom of the Messiah; for fear they should be scandalized in him, and give up the hopes they now had in him, and forsake him. This he tells them, ver. 1 of this xvith chapter: "These things I have said unto you, that you may not be scandalized." The last thing he had told them, before his saying this to them, we find in the last verses of the preceding chapter: "When the Paraclet is come, the Spirit of truth, he shall witness concerning me." He shall show you who I am, and witness it to the world; and then, "Ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." He shall call to your mind what I have said and done, that ye may understand it, and know, and bear witness concerning me. And again here, John xvi., after he had told them they could not bear what he had more to say, he adds, ver. 13, "Howbeit, when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth; and he will show you things to come: he shall glorify me." By the Spirit, when he comes, ye shall be fully instructed concerning me; and though you cannot yet, from what I have said to you, clearly comprehend my kingdom

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and glory, yet he shall make it known to you wherein it consists: and though I am now in a mean state, and ready to be given up to contempt, torment, and death, so that ye know not what to think of it; yet the Spirit, when he comes, "shall glorify me," and fully satisfy you of my power and kingdom; and that I sit on the right hand of God, to order all things for the good and increase of it, till I come again at the last day, in the fulness of glory.

Accordingly, the apostles had a full and clear sight and persuasion of this, after they had received the Holy Ghost; and they preached it every where boldly and openly, without the least remainder of doubt or uncertainty. But that, even so late as this, they understood not his death and resurrection, is evident from ver. 17, 18, "Then said some of his disciples among themselves, "What is it that he saith unto us; A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again, a little while, and ye shall see me; and because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? We know not what he saith." Upon which he goes on to discourse to them of his death and resurrection, and of the power they should have of doing miracles. But all this he declares to them in a mystical and involved way of speaking: as he tells them himself, ver. 25, "These things have I spoken to you in proverbs;" *i. e.* in general, obscure, ænigmatical, or figurative terms (all which, as well as allusive apologues, the Jews called proverbs or parables.) Hitherto my declaring of myself to you hath been obscure, and with reserve; and I have not spoken of myself to you in plain and direct words, because ye "could not bear it." A Messiah, and not a King, you could not understand: and a King living in poverty and persecution, and dying the death of a slave and malefactor upon a cross; you could not put together. And had I told you in plain words, that I was the Messiah, and given you a direct commission to preach to others, that I professedly owned myself to be the Messiah; you and they would have been ready to have made a commotion, to have set me upon the throne of my father David, and to fight for

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me; and that your Messiah, your King, in whom are your hopes of a kingdom, should not be delivered up into the hands of his enemies, to be put to death; and of this Peter will instantly give you a proof. But "the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in parables; but I shall show unto you plainly of the Father." My death and resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Ghost, will speedily enlighten you, and then I shall make you know the will and design of my Father; what a kingdom I am to have, and by what means, and to what end, ver. 27. And this the Father himself will show unto you; "For he loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from the Father." Because ye have believed that I am "the Son of God, the Messiah;" that he hath anointed and sent me; though it hath not yet been fully discovered to you, what kind of kingdom it shall be, nor by what means brought about. And then our Saviour, without being asked, explaining to them what he had said, and making them understand better what before they stuck at, and complained secretly among themselves that they understood not; they thereupon declare, ver. 30, "Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee." It is plain, thou knowest men's thoughts and doubts before they ask. "By this we believe that thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered, Do ye now believe?" Notwithstanding that you now believe, that I came from God, and am the Messiah, sent by him; "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered;" and as it is Matth. xxvi. 31, and "shall all be scandalized in me." What it is to be scandalized in him, we may see by what followed hereupon, if that which he says to St. Peter, Mark xiv., did not sufficiently explain it.

This I have been the more particular in, that it may be seen, that in this last discourse to his disciples (where he opened himself more than he had hitherto done; and where, if any thing more was required to make them believers than what they already believed, we might have expected they should have heard of it) there were

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no new articles proposed to them, but what they believed before, viz. that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, sent from the Father; though of his manner of proceeding, and his sudden leaving of the world, and some few particulars, he made them understand something more than they did before. But as to the main design of the Gospel, viz. that he had a kingdom, that he should be put to death, and rise again, and ascend into heaven to his Father, and come again in glory to judge the world; this he had told them: and so had acquainted them with the great counsel of God, in sending him the Messiah, and omitted nothing that was necessary to be known or believed in it. And so he tells them himself, John xv. 15, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord does: but I have called you friends; for *all things* that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you;" though perhaps ye do not so fully comprehend them as you will shortly, when I am risen and ascended.

To conclude all, in his prayer, which shuts up this discourse, he tells the Father, what he had made known to his apostles; the result whereof we have, John xvii. 8, "I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and *they have believed that thou didst send me.*" Which is, in effect, that he was the Messiah promised and sent by God. And then he prays for them, and adds, ver. 20, 21, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word." What that word was, through which others should believe in him, we have seen in the preaching of the apostles, all through the history of the Acts, viz. this one great point, that Jesus was the Messiah. The apostles, he says, ver. 25, "know that thou hast sent me;" *i. e.* are assured that I am the Messiah. And in ver. 21 and 23, he prays, "That the world may believe" (which, ver. 23, is called knowing) "that thou hast sent me." So that what Christ would have believed by his disciples we may see by this his last prayer for them, when

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he was leaving the world, as by what he preached whilst he was in it.

And, as a testimony of this, one of his last actions, even when he was upon the cross, was to confirm his doctrine, by giving salvation to one of the thieves that was crucified with him, upon his declaration, that he believed him to be the Messiah: for so much the words of his request imported, when he said, "Remember me, Lord, when thou comest into thy kingdom," Luke xxiii. 42. To which Jesus replied, ver. 43, "Verily, I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." An expression very remarkable: for as Adam, by sin, lost paradise, *i. e.* a state of happy immortality; here the believing thief, through his faith in Jesus the Messiah, is promised to be put in paradise, and so reinstated in an happy immortality.

Thus our Saviour ended his life. And what he did after his resurrection, St. Luke tells us, Acts i. 3, That he showed himself to the apostles, "forty days, speaking things concerning the kingdom of God." This was what our Saviour preached in the whole course of his ministry, before his passion: and no other mysteries of faith does he now discover to them after his resurrection. All he says, is concerning the kingdom of God; and what it was he said concerning that, we shall see presently out of the other evangelists; having first only taken notice, that when now they asked him, ver. 6, "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom of Israel? He said unto them, ver. 7, It is not for you to know the times and the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power; but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, unto the utmost parts of the earth." Their great business was to be witnesses to Jesus, of his life, death, resurrection, and ascension; which, put together, were undeniable proofs of his being the Messiah. This was what they were to preach, and what he said to them, concerning the kingdom of God; as will appear by what is recorded of it in the other evangelists.

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When on the day of his resurrection he appeared to the two going to Emmaus, Luke xxiv., they declare, ver. 21, what his disciples' faith in him was: "But we trusted that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel;" *i. e.* we believed that he was the Messiah, come to deliver the nation of the Jews. Upon this, Jesus tells them, they ought to believe him to be the Messiah, notwithstanding what had happened; nay, they ought, by his sufferings and death, to be confirmed in that faith, that he was the Messiah. And ver. 26, 27, "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself," how, "that the Messiah ought to have suffered these things, and to have entered into his glory." Now he applies the prophecies of the Messiah to himself, which we read not that he did ever do before his passion. And afterwards appearing to the eleven, Luke xxiv. 36, he said unto them, ver. 44—47, "These are the words, which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scripture, and said unto them: Thus it is written, and thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Here we see what it was he had preached to them, though not in so plain open words, before his crucifixion; and what it is he now makes them understand; and what it was that was to be preached to all nations, viz. That he was the Messiah that had suffered, and rose from the dead the third day, and fulfilled all things that were written in the Old Testament concerning the Messiah; and that those who believed this, and repented, should receive remission of their sins, through this faith in him. Or, as St. Mark has it, chap. xvi. 15, "Go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned," ver. 16. What the

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"Gospel," or "good news," was, we have showed already, viz. The happy tidings of the Messiah being come. Ver. 20, And "they went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." What the "word" was which they preached, and the Lord confirmed with miracles, we have seen already, out of the history of their Acts. I have already given an account of their preaching every where, as it is recorded in the Acts, except some few places, where the kingdom of "the Messiah" is mentioned under the name of "the kingdom of God;" which I forbore to set down, till I had made it plain out of the evangelists, that that was no other but the kingdom of the Messiah.

It may be seasonable therefore, now, to add to those sermons we have formerly seen of St. Paul, (wherein he preached no other article of faith, but that "Jesus was the Messiah," the King, who, being risen from the dead, now reigneth, and shall more publicly manifest his kingdom, in judging the world at the last day) what farther is left upon record of his preaching. Acts xix. 8, at Ephesus, "Paul went into the synagogues, and spake boldly for the space of three months; disputing and persuading concerning the kingdom of God." And, Acts xx. 25, at Miletus he thus takes leave of the elders of Ephesus: "And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more." What this preaching the kingdom of God was, he tells you, ver. 20, 21, "I have kept nothing back from you, which was profitable unto you; but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house; testifying both to the Jews, and to the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." And so again, Acts xxviii. 23, 24, "When they [the Jews at Rome] had appointed him [Paul] a day, there came many to him into his lodging; to whom he expounded and testified the kingdom of God; persuading them concerning Jesus, both out of the law of Moses, and out of the prophets, from morning to evening. And some believed the

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things which were spoken, and some believed not." And the history of the Acts is concluded with this account of St. Paul's preaching: "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus the Messiah." We may therefore here apply the same conclusion to the history of our Saviour, writ by the evangelists, and to the history of the apostles, writ in the Acts, which St. John does to his own Gospel, chap. xx. 30, 31, "Many other signs did Jesus before his disciples;" and in many other places the apostles preached the same doctrine, "which are not written" in these books; "but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in his name."

What St. John thought necessary and sufficient to be believed, for the attaining eternal life, he here tells us. And this not in the first dawning of the Gospel; when, perhaps, some will be apt to think less was required to be believed, than after the doctrine of faith, and mystery of salvation, was more fully explained, in the epistles writ by the apostles, for it is to be remembered, that St. John says this, not as soon as Christ was ascended; for these words, with the rest of St. John's Gospel, were not written till many years after not only the other Gospels, and St. Luke's history of the Acts, but in all appearance, after all the epistles writ by the other apostles. So that above threescore years after our Saviour's passion (for so long after, both Epiphanius and St. Jerom assure us this Gospel was written) St. John knew nothing else required to be believed, for the attaining of life, but that "Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God."

To this, it is likely, it will be objected by some, that to believe only that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, is but an historical, and not a justifying, or saving faith.

To which I answer, That I allow to the makers of systems and their followers to invent and use what distinctions they please, and to call things by what names

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they think fit. But I cannot allow to them, or to any man, an authority to make a religion for me, or to alter that which God hath revealed. And if they please to call the believing that which our Saviour and his apostles preached, and proposed alone to be believed, an historical faith; they have their liberty. But they must have a care, how they deny it to be a justifying or saving faith, when our Saviour and his apostles have declared it so to be; and taught no other which men should receive, and whereby they should be made believers unto eternal life: unless they can so far make bold with our Saviour, for the sake of their beloved systems, as to say, that he forgot what he came into the world for; and that he and his apostles did not instruct people right in the way and mysteries of salvation. For that this is the sole doctrine pressed and required to be believed in the whole tenor of our Saviour's and his apostles' preaching, we have showed through the whole history of the evangelists and the Acts. And I challenge them to show that there was any other doctrine, upon their assent to which, or disbelief of it, men were pronounced believers or unbelievers; and accordingly received into the church of Christ, as members of his body; as far as mere believing could make them so; or else kept out of it. This was the only Gospel-article of faith which was preached to them. And if nothing else was preached every where, the apostle's argument will hold against any other articles of faith to be believed under the Gospel, Rom. x. 14, "How shall they believe that whereof they have not heard?" For to preach any other doctrines necessary to be believed, we do not find that any body was sent.

Perhaps it will farther be urged, that this is not a "saving faith;" because such a faith as this the devils may have, and it was plain they had; for they believed and declared "Jesus to be the Messiah." And St. James, ch. ii. 19, tells us, "The devils believe and tremble; and yet they shall not be saved. To which I answer, 1. That they could not be saved by any faith, to whom it was not proposed as a means of salvation, nor ever promised to be counted for righteousness. This was an act

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of grace shown only to mankind. God dealt so favourably with the posterity of Adam, that if they would believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the promised King and Saviour, and perform what other conditions were required of them by the covenant of grace; God would justify them, because of this belief. He would account this faith to them for righteousness, and look on it as making up the defects of their obedience; which being thus supplied, by what was taken instead of it, they were looked on as just or righteous; and so inherited eternal life. But this favour shown to mankind, was never offered to the fallen angels. They had no such proposals made to them: and therefore, whatever of this kind was proposed to men, it availed not devils, whatever they performed of it. This covenant of grace was never offered to them.

2. I answer; that though the devils believed, yet they could not be saved by the covenant of grace; because they performed not the other condition required in it, altogether as necessary to be performed as this of believing: and that is repentance. Repentance is as absolute a condition of the covenant of grace as faith; and as necessary to be performed as that. John the Baptist, who was to prepare the way for the Messiah, "Preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins," Mark i. 4.

As John began his preaching with "Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," Matt. iii. 2. So did our Saviour begin his, Matt. iv. 17, "From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Or, as St. Mark has it in that parallel place, Mark i. 14, 15, "Now, after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel." This was not only the beginning of his preaching, but the sum of all that he did preach; viz. That men should repent, and believe the good tidings which he brought them; that "the time was fulfilled" for the coming of the Messiah. And this was what his apostles

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preached, when he sent them out, Mark vi. 12, "And they, going out, preached that men should repent." Believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and repenting, were so necessary and fundamental parts of the covenant of grace, that one of them alone is often put for both. For here St. Mark mentions nothing but their preaching repentance: as St. Luke, in the parallel place, chap. ix. 6, mentions nothing but their evangelizing, or preaching the good news of the kingdom of the Messiah: and St. Paul often, in his epistles, puts faith for the whole duty of a Christian. But yet the tenor of the Gospel is what Christ declares, Luke xii. 3, 5, "Unless ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." And in the parable of the rich man in hell, delivered by our Saviour, Luke xvi. repentance alone is the means proposed, of avoiding that place of torment, ver. 30, 31. And what the tenor of the doctrine which should be preached to the world should be, he tells his apostles, after his resurrection, Luke xxiv. 27, viz. That repentance and remission of sins should be preached "in his name," who was the Messiah. And accordingly believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and repenting, was what the apostles preached. So Peter began, Acts ii. 38, "Repent, and be baptized." These two things were required for the remission of sins, viz. entering themselves in the kingdom of God; and owning and professing themselves the subjects of Jesus, whom they believed to be the Messiah, and received for their Lord and King; for that was to be "baptized in his name:" baptism being an initiating ceremony, known to the Jews, whereby those, who leaving heathenism, and professing a submission to the law of Moses, were received into the commonwealth of Israel. And so it was made use of by our Saviour, to be that solemn visible act, whereby those who believed him to be the Messiah, received him as their King, and professed obedience to him, were admitted as subjects into his kingdom: which in the Gospel, is called "the kingdom of God;" and in the Acts and epistles, often by another name, viz. the "Church."

The same St. Peter preaches again to the Jews, Acts

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iii. 19, "Repent, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

What this repentance was which the new covenant required, as one of the conditions to be performed by all those who should receive the benefits of that covenant, is plain in the Scripture, to be not only a sorrow for sins past, but (what is a natural consequence of such sorrow, if it be real) a turning from them into a new and contrary life. And so they are joined together, Acts iii. 19, "Repent and turn about;" or, as we render it, "be converted." And Acts xxvi. 20, "Repent and turn to God."

And sometimes "turning about" is put alone to signify repentance, Matt. xiii. 15. Luke xxii. 32, which in other words is well expressed by "newness of life." For it being certain that he, who is really sorry for his sins, and abhors them, will turn from them, and forsake them; either of these acts, which have so natural a connexion one with the other, may be, and is often put for both together. Repentance is an hearty sorrow for our past misdeeds, and a sincere resolution and endeavour, to the utmost of our power, to conform all our actions to the law of God. So that repentance does not consist in one single act of sorrow, (though that being the first and leading act, gives denomination to the whole) but in "doing works meet for repentance;" in a sincere obedience to the law of Christ, the remainder of our lives. This was called for by John the Baptist, the preacher of repentance, Matt. iii. 8, "Bring forth fruits meet for repentance." And by St. Paul here, Acts xxvi. 20, "Repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance." There are works to follow belonging to repentance, as well as sorrow for what is past.

These two, faith and repentance, *i. e.* believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and a good life, are the indispensable conditions of the new covenant, to be performed by all those who would obtain eternal life. The reasonableness, or rather necessity of which, that we may the better comprehend, we must a little look back to what was said in the beginning.

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Adam being the Son of God, and so St. Luke calls him, chap. iii. 38, had this part also of the likeness and image of his Father, viz. that he was immortal. But Adam, transgressing the command given him by his heavenly Father, incurred the penalty; forfeited that state of immortality, and became mortal. After this, Adam begot children: but they were "in his own likeness, after his own image;" mortal, like their father.

God nevertheless, out of his infinite mercy, willing to bestow eternal life on mortal men, sends Jesus Christ into the world; who being conceived in the womb of a virgin (that had not known man) by the immediate power of God, was properly the Son of God; according to what the angel declared unto his mother, Luke i. 30—35, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the SON OF GOD." So that being the Son of God, he was, like the Father, immortal; as he tells us, John v. 26, "As the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself."

And that immortality is a part of that image, wherein those (who were the immediate sons of God, so as to have no other father) were made like their father, appears probable, not only from the places in Genesis concerning Adam, above taken notice of, but seems to me also to be intimated in some expressions, concerning Jesus the Son of God, in the New Testament, Col. i. 15, he is called "the image of the invisible God." Invisible seems put in, to obviate any gross imagination, that he (as images used to do) represented God in any corporeal or visible resemblance. And there is farther subjoined, to lead us into the meaning of it, "The first-born of every creature;" which is farther explained, ver. 18, where he is termed "The first-born from the dead:" thereby making out, and showing himself to be the image of the invisible; that death hath no power over him; but being the Son of God, and not having forfeited that sonship by any transgression;

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was the heir of eternal life, as Adam should have been, had he continued in his filial duty. In the same sense the apostle seems to use the word image in other places, viz. Rom. viii. 29, "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." This image, to which they were conformed, seems to be immortality and eternal life: for it is remarkable, that in both these places St. Paul speaks of the resurrection; and that Christ was "The first-born among many brethren;" he being by birth the Son of God, and the others only by adoption, as we see in this same chapter, ver. 15—17, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. And if children, then heirs, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may also be glorified together." And hence we see, that our Saviour vouchsafes to call those, who at the day of judgment are, through him, entering into eternal life, his brethren; Matt. xxv. 40, "Inasmuch as we have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren." May we not in this find a reason, why God so frequently in the New Testament, and so seldom, if at all, in the Old, is mentioned under the single title of THE FATHER? And therefore our Saviour says, Matt. xi., "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." God has now a Son again in the world, the first-born of many brethren, who all now, by the Spirit of adoption, can say, Abba, Father. And we, by adoption, being for his sake made his brethren, and the sons of God, come to share in that inheritance, which was his natural right; he being by birth the Son of God: which inheritance is eternal life. And again, ver. 23, "We groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body;" whereby is plainly meant, the change of these frail mortal bodies, into the spiritual immortal bodies at the resurrection; "When this mortal shall have put on immortality," 1 Cor. xv. 54, which in that chapter,

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ver. 42—44, he farther expresses thus; "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body," &c. To which he subjoins, ver. 49, "As we have borne the image of the earthy," (*i. e.* as we have been mortal, like earthy Adam, our father, from whom we are descended, when he was turned out of paradise) "we shall also bear the image of the heavenly;" into whose sonship and inheritance being adopted, we shall, at the resurrection, receive that adoption we expect, "even the redemption of our bodies;" and after his image, which is the image of the Father, become immortal. Hear what he says himself, Luke xx. 35, 36, "They who shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Neither can they die any more; for they are equal to the angels, and are the SONS OF GOD, being the sons of the resurrection." And he that shall read St. Paul's arguing, Acts xiii. 32, 33, will find that the great evidence that Jesus was the "Son of God," was his resurrection. Then the image of his Father appeared in him, when he visibly entered into the state of immortality. For thus the apostle reasons, "We preach to you, how that the promise which was made to our fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee."

This may serve a little to explain the immortality of the sons of God, who are in this like their Father, made after his image and likeness. But that our Saviour was so, he himself farther declares, John x. 18, where, speaking of his life, he says, "No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself: I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again." Which he could not have had, if he had been a mortal man, the son of a man, of the seed of Adam; or else had by any transgression forfeited his life. For "the wages

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of sin is death:" and he that hath incurred death for his own transgression, cannot lay down his life for another, as our Saviour professes he did. For he was the just one, Acts vii. 52, and xxii. 14, "Who knew no sin," 2 Cor. v. 21, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." And thus, "As by man came death, so by man came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive."

For this laying down his life for others, our Saviour tells us, John x. 17, "Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." And this his obedience and suffering was rewarded with a kingdom: which he tells us, Luke xxii. "His Father had appointed unto him;" and which, it is evident out of the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. xii. 2, he had a regard to in his sufferings: "Who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Which kingdom, given him upon this account of his obedience, suffering, and death, he himself takes notice of in these words, John xvii. 1—4, "Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee: as thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. And this is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus, the Messiah, whom thou hast sent. I have glorified thee on earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." And St. Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, chap. ii. 8—11, "He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord."

Thus God, we see, designed his Son Jesus Christ a kingdom, an everlasting kingdom in heaven. But

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though, "as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;" and all men shall return to life again at the last day; yet all men having sinned, and thereby "come short of the glory of God," as St. Paul assures us, Rom. iii. 23, *i. e.* not attaining to the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah, which is often called the glory of God; (as may be seen, Rom. v. 2, and xv. 7, and ii. 7. Matt. xvi. 27. Mark viii. 38. For no one who is unrighteous, *i. e.* comes short of perfect righteousness, shall be admitted into the eternal life of that kingdom; as is declared, 1 Cor. vi. 9, "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God;") and death, the wages of sin, being the portion of all those who had transgressed the righteous law of God; the Son of God would in vain have come into the world, to lay the foundations of a kingdom, and gather together a select people out of the world, if, (they being found guilty at their appearance before the judgment-seat of the righteous Judge of all men at the last day) instead of entrance into eternal life in the kingdom he had prepared for them, they should receive death, the just reward of sin which every one of them was guilty of: this second death would have left him no subjects; and instead of those ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, there would not have been one left him to sing praises unto his name, saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." God therefore, out of his mercy to mankind, and for the erecting of the kingdom of his Son, and furnishing it with subjects out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; proposed to the children of men, that as many of them as would believe Jesus his Son (whom he sent into the world) to be the Messiah, the promised Deliverer; and would receive him for their King and Ruler; should have all their past sins, disobedience, and rebellion forgiven them: and if for the future they lived in a sincere obedience to his law, to the utmost of their power, the sins of human frailty for the time to come, as well as all those of their past lives, should, for his Son's sake, because they gave

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themselves up to him, to be his subjects, be forgiven them: and so their faith, which made them be baptized into his name, (*i. e.* enrol themselves in the kingdom of Jesus the Messiah, and profess themselves his subjects, and consequently live by the laws of his kingdom) should be accounted to them for righteousness; *i. e.* should supply the defects of a scanty obedience in the sight of God; who counting faith to them for righteousness, or complete obedience, did thus justify, or make them just, and thereby capable of eternal life.

Now, that this is the faith for which God of his free grace justifies sinful man, (for "it is God alone that justifieth," Rom. viii. 33. Rom. iii. 26,) we have already showed, by observing through all the history of our Saviour and the apostles, recorded in the evangelists, and in the Acts, what he and his apostles preached, and proposed to be believed. We shall show now, that besides believing him to be the Messiah, their King, it was farther required, that those who would have the privilege, advantage, and deliverance of his kingdom, should enter themselves into it; and by baptism being made denizens, and solemnly incorporated into that kingdom, live as became subjects obedient to the laws of it. For if they believed him to be the Messiah, their King, but would not obey his laws, and would not have him to reign over them; they were but the greater rebels; and God would not justify them for a faith that did but increase their guilt, and oppose diametrically the kingdom and design of the Messiah; "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works," Titus ii. 14. And therefore St. Paul tells the Galatians, That that which availeth is faith; but "faith working by love." And that faith without works, *i. e.* the works of sincere obedience to the law and will of Christ, is not sufficient for our justification, St. James shews at large, chap. ii.

Neither, indeed, could it be otherwise; for life, eternal life, being the reward of justice or righteousness only appointed by the righteous God (who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity) to those who only had no

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taint or infection of sin upon them, it is impossible that he should justify those who had no regard to justice at all, whatever they believed. This would have been to encourage iniquity, contrary to the purity of his nature; and to have condemned that eternal law of right, which is holy, just, and good; of which no one precept or rule is abrogated or repealed; nor indeed can be, whilst God is an holy, just, and righteous God, and man a rational creature. The duties of that law, arising from the constitution of his very nature, are of eternal obligation; nor can it be taken away or dispensed with, without changing the nature of things, overturning the measures of right and wrong, and thereby introducing and authorizing irregularity, confusion, and disorder in the world. Christ's coming into the world was not for such an end as that; but, on the contrary, to reform the corrupt state of degenerate man; and out of those who would mend their lives, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, erect a new kingdom.

This is the law of that kingdom, as well as of all mankind; and that law, by which all men shall be judged at the last day. Only those who have believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and have taken him to be their King, with a sincere endeavour after righteousness, in obeying his law;-shall have their past sins not imputed to them; and shall have that faith taken instead of obedience, where frailty and weakness made them transgress, and sin prevailed after conversion; in those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, (or perfect obedience) and do not allow themselves in acts of disobedience and rebellion, against the laws of that kingdom they are entered into.

He did not expect, it is true, a perfect obedience, void of slips and falls: he knew our make, and the weakness of our constitution too well, and was sent with a supply for that defect. Besides, perfect obedience was the righteousness of the law of works; and then the reward would be of debt, and not of grace; and to such there was no need of faith to be imputed to them for righteousness. They stood upon their own legs, were just already, and needed no allowance to be made them for

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believing Jesus to be the Messiah, taking him for their king, and becoming his subjects. But that Christ does require obedience, sincere obedience, is evident from the law he himself delivers, (unless he can be supposed to give and inculcate laws, only to have them disobeyed) and from the sentence he will pass when he comes to judge.

The faith required was, to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the Anointed; who had been promised by God to the world. Among the Jews (to whom the promises and prophecies of the Messiah were more immediately delivered) anointing was used to three sorts of persons, at their inauguration; whereby they were set apart to three great offices, viz. of priests, prophets, and kings. Though these three offices be in holy writ attributed to our Saviour, yet I do not remember that he any where assumes to himself the title of a priest, or mentions any thing relating to his priesthood; nor does he speak of his being a prophet but very sparingly, and only once or twice, as it were by the by: but the Gospel, or the good news of the kingdom of the Messiah, is what he preaches every where, and makes it his great business to publish to the world. This he did, not only as most agreeable to the expectation of the Jews, who looked for their Messiah, chiefly as coming in power to be their king and deliverer; but as it best answered the chief end of his coming, which was to be a king, and, as such, to be received by those who would be his subjects in the kingdom which he came to erect. And though he took not directly on himself the title of King, until he was in custody, and in the hands of Pilate; yet it is plain, "King" and "King of Israel" were the familiar and received titles of the Messiah. See John i. 50. Luke xix. 38, compared with Matt. xxi. 9, and Mark xi. 9. John xii. 13. Matt. xxi. 5. Luke xxiii. 2, compared with Matt. xxvii. 11, and John xviii. 33—37. Mark xv. 12, compared with Matt. xxvii. 22, 42.

What those were to do who believed him to be the Messiah, and received him for their king, that they might be admitted to be partakers with him of his kingdom in glory, we shall best know by the laws he

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gives them, and requires them to obey; and by the sentence which he himself will give, when, sitting on his throne, they shall all appear at his tribunal, to receive every one his doom from the mouth of this righteous Judge of all men.

What he proposed to his followers to be believed, we have already seen, by examining his and his apostles' preaching, step by step, all through the history of the four evangelists, and the Acts of the Apostles. The same method will best and plainest show us whether he required of those who believed him to be the Messiah any thing besides that faith, and what it was. For, he being a king, we shall see by his commands what he expects from his subjects: for, if he did not expect obedience to them, his commands would be but mere mockery; and if there were no punishment for the transgressors of them, his laws would not be the laws of a king, and that authority to command, and power to chastise the disobedient, but empty talk, without force, and without influence.

We shall therefore from his injunctions (if any such there be) see what he has made necessary to be performed, by all those who shall be received into eternal life, in his kingdom prepared in the heavens. And in this we cannot be deceived. What we have from his own mouth, especially if repeated over and over again, in different places and expressions, will be past doubt and controversy. I shall pass by all that is said by St. John Baptist, or any other before our Saviour's entry upon his ministry, and public promulgation of the laws of his kingdom.

He began his preaching with a command to repent, as St. Matthew tells us, iv. 17, "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, Repent; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." And Luke v. 32, he tells the Scribes and Pharisees, "I come not to call the righteous," (those who were truly so needed no help, they had a right to the tree of life,) "but sinners to repentance."

In his sermon, as it is called, in the mount, Luke vi. and Matth. v., &c. he commands they should be exem-

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plary in good works: "Let your light so shine amongst men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven," Matth. v. 15. And that they might know what he came for, and what he expected of them, he tells them, ver. 17—20, "Think not that I am come to dissolve," or loosen, "the law, or the prophets: I am not come to dissolve," or loosen, "butto make it full," or complete; by giving it you in its true and strict sense. Here we see he confirms, and at once re-enforces all the moral precepts in the Old Testament. "For verily I say to you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot, or one tittle, shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be done. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least (*i. e.* as it is interpreted, shall not be at all) in the kingdom of heaven." Ver. 21, "I say unto you, That except your righteousness," *i. e.* your performance of the eternal law of right, "shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." And then he goes on to make good what he said, ver. 17, viz. "That he was come to complete the law," viz. by giving its full and clear sense, free from the corrupt and loosening glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, ver. 22—26. He tells them, That not only murder, but causeless anger, and so much as words of contempt, were forbidden. He commands them to be reconciled and kind towards their adversaries; and that upon pain of condemnation. In the following part of his sermon, which is to be read Luke vi. and more at large, Matth. v. vi. vii. he not only forbids actual uncleanness, but all irregular desires, upon pain of hell-fire; causeless divorces; swearing in conversation, as well as forswearing in judgment; revenge; retaliation; ostentation of charity, of devotion, and of fasting; repetitions in prayer, covetousness, worldly care, censoriousness: and on the other side commands loving our enemies, doing good to those that hate us, blessing those that curse us, praying for those that despitefully use us; patience and meekness under injuries, forgiveness, liberality, compassion: and

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closes all his particular injunctions with this general golden rule, Matt. vii. 12, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." And to show how much he is in earnest, and expects obedience to these laws, he tells them, Luke vi. 35, That if they obey, "great shall be their *reward*;" they "shall be called, the sons of the Highest." And to all this, in the conclusion, he adds the solemn sanction; "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" It is in vain for you to take me for the Messiah your King, unless you obey me. "Not every one who calls me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven," or be the sons of God; "but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven." To such disobedient subjects, though they have prophesied and done miracles in my name, I shall say at the day of judgment, "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity; I know you not."

When, Matt. xii. he was told, that his mother and brethren sought to speak with him, ver. 49, "Stretching out his hands to his disciples, he said, "Behold my mother and my brethren; for whosoever shall do the will of my Father, who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." They could not be children of the adoption, and fellow-heirs with him of eternal life, who did not do the will of his heavenly Father.

Matt. xv. and Mark vi. the Pharisees finding fault, that his disciples eat with unclean hands, he makes this declaration to his apostles: "Do not ye perceive, that whatsoever from without entereth into a man, cannot defile him, because it entereth not into his heart, but his belly? That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man; for from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, false witnesses, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these ill things come from within, and defile a man."

He commands self-denial, and the exposing ourselves to suffering and danger, rather than to deny or disown

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him: and this upon pain of losing our souls; which are of more worth than all the world. This we may read, Matt. xvi. 24—27, and the parallel places, Mark viii. and Luke ix.

The apostles disputing among them, who should be greatest in the kingdom of the Messiah, Matt. xviii. 1, he thus determines the controversy, Mark ix. 35, "If any one will be first, let him be last of all, and servant of all:" and setting a child before them, adds, Matt. xviii. 3, "Verily, I say unto you, Unless ye turn, and become as children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Matt. xviii. 15, "If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen and publican." Ver. 21, "Peter said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Till seven times? Jesus said unto him, I say not unto thee, till seven times; but until seventy times seven." And then ends the parable of the servant, who being himself forgiven, was rigorous to his fellow-servant, with these words, ver. 34: "and his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due to him. So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if you from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."

Luke x. 25, to the lawyer, asking him, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said, What is written in the law? How readest thou?" He answered, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." Jesus said, "This do, and thou shalt live." And when the lawyer, upon our Saviour's parable of the good Samaritan, was forced to confess, that he that showed

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mercy was his neighbour; Jesus dismissed him with this charge, ver. 37, "Go, and do thou likewise."

Luke xi. 41, "Give alms of such things as ye have: behold, all things are clean unto you."

Luke xii. 15, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." Ver. 22, "Be not solicitous what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, nor what ye shall put on;" be not fearful, or apprehensive of want; "for it is your Father's pleasure to give you a kingdom. Sell that you have, and give alms: and provide yourselves bags that wax not old, a treasure in the heavens, that faileth not: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for the Lord, when he will return. Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching. Blessed is that servant, whom the Lord having made ruler of his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season, the Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But if that servant say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the men-servants, and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware; and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with unbelievers. And that servant who knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."

Luke xiv. 11, "Whosoever exalteth himself, shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself, shall be exalted."

Ver. 12, When thou makest a dinner, or supper, call "not thy friends, or thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen,

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nor thy neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor and maimed, the lame and the blind; and thou shalt be blessed, for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

Ver. 33, "So likewise, whosoever he be of you, that is not ready to forego all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple."

Luke xvi. 9, "I say unto you, make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. If ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?"

Luke xvii. 3, "If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again unto thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him."

Luke xviii. 1, "He spoke a parable to them, to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."

Ver. 18, "One comes to him, and asks him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He says, Which? Jesus said, Thou knowest the commandments. Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; defraud not; honour thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. He said, All these have I observed from my youth. Jesus hearing this, loved him; and said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." To understand this right, we must take notice, that this young man asks our Saviour, what he must do to be admitted effectually into the kingdom of the Messiah? The Jews believed, that when the Messiah

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came, those of their nation that received him should not die; but that they, with those who, being dead, should then be raised again by him, should enjoy eternal life with him. Our Saviour, in answer to this demand, tells the young man, that to obtain the eternal life of the kingdom of the Messiah, he must keep the commandments. And then enumerating several of the precepts of the law, the young man says, he had observed these from his childhood. For which, the text tells us, Jesus loved him. But our Saviour, to try whether in earnest he believed him to be the Messiah, and resolved to take him to be his King, and to obey him as such, bids him give all that he has to the poor, and come, and follow him; and he should have treasure in heaven. This I look on to be the meaning of the place; this, of selling all he had, and giving it to the poor, not being a standing law of his kingdom; but a probationary command to this young man; to try whether he truly believed him to be the Messiah, and was ready to obey his commands, and relinquish all to follow him, when he, his Prince, required it.

And therefore we see, Luke xix. 14, where our Saviour takes notice of the Jews not receiving him as the Messiah, he expresses it thus: "We will not have this man to reign over us." It is not enough to believe him to be the Messiah, unless we also obey his laws, and take him to be our King, to reign over us.

Matt. xxii. 11—13, he that had not on the wedding-garment, though he accepted of the invitation, and came to the wedding, was cast into utter darkness. By the wedding-garment, it is evident good works are meant here; that wedding-garment of fine linen, clean and white, which we are told, Rev. xix. 8, is the δικαιώματα, "righteous acts of the saints;" or, as St. Paul calls it, Ephes. iv. 1, "The walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called." This appears from the parable itself: "The kingdom of heaven," says our Saviour, ver. 2, "is like unto a king, who made a marriage for his son." And here he distinguishes those who were invited into three sorts: 1. Those who were invited, and came not; *i. e.* those who had the Gospel,

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the good news of the kingdom of God proposed to them, but believed not. 2. Those who came, but had not on a wedding-garment; *i. e.* believed Jesus to be the Messiah, but were not new clad (as I may so say) with a true repentance, and amendment of life: nor adorned with those virtues, which the apostle, Col. iii, requires to be put on. 3. Those who were invited, did come, and had on the wedding-garment; *i. e.* heard the Gospel, believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and sincerely obeyed his laws. These three sorts are plainly designed here; whereof the last only were the blessed, who were to enjoy the kingdom prepared for them.

Matt. xxiii. "Be not ye called Rabbi; for one is your Master, even the Messiah, and ye are all brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even the Messiah. But he that is greatest amongst you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."

Luke xxi. 34, "Take heed to yourselves, lest your hearts be at any time overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life."

Luke xxii. 25, "He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so. But he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

John xiii. 34, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." This command, of loving one another, is repeated again, chap. xv. 12, and 17.

John xiv. 15, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Ver. 21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him." Ver. 23, "If a

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man loveth me, he will keep my words." Ver. 24, "He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings."

John xv. 8, "In this is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." Ver. 14, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

Thus we see our Saviour not only confirmed the moral law, and, clearing it from the corrupt glosses of the Scribes and Pharisees, showed the strictness as well as obligation of its injunctions; but moreover, upon occasion, requires the obedience of his disciples to several of the commands he afresh lays upon them; with the enforcement of unspeakable rewards and punishments in another world, according to their obedience or disobedience. There is not, I think, any of the duties of morality, which he has not, somewhere or other, by himself and his apostles, inculcated over and over again to his followers in express terms. And is it for nothing that he is so instant with them to bring forth fruit? Does he, their King, command, and is it an indifferent thing? Or will their happiness or misery not at all depend upon it, whether they obey or no? They were required to believe him to be the Messiah; which faith is of grace promised to be reckoned to them, for the completing of their righteousness, wherein it was defective: but righteousness, or obedience to the law of God, was their great business, which if they could have attained by their own performances, there would have been no need of this gracious allowance, in reward of their faith: but eternal life, after the resurrection, had been their due by a former covenant, even that of works; the rule whereof was never abolished, though the rigour was abated. The duties enjoined in it were duties still. Their obligations had never ceased, nor a wilful neglect of them was ever dispensed with. But their past transgressions were pardoned, to those who received Jesus, the promised Messiah, for their king; and their future slips covered, if, renouncing their former iniquities, they entered into his kingdom, and continued his subjects with a steady resolution and endeavour to obey his laws. This righteousness, there-

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fore, a complete obedience and freedom from sin, are still sincerely to be endeavoured after. And it is nowhere promised, that those who persist in a wilful disobedience to his laws, shall be received into the eternal bliss of his kingdom, how much soever they believe in him.

A sincere obedience, how can any one doubt to be, or scruple to call, a condition of the new covenant, as well as faith; whoever reads our Saviour's sermon in the mount, to omit all the rest? Can any thing be more express than these words of our Lord? Matt. vi. 14, "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." And John xiii. 17, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if you do them." This is so indispensable a condition of the new covenant, that believing without it will not do, nor be accepted; if our Saviour knew the terms on which he would admit men into life. "Why call ye me, Lord, Lord," says he, Luke vi. 46, "and do not the things which I say?" It is not enough to believe him to be the Messiah, the Lord, without obeying him. For that these he speaks to here were believers, is evident from the parallel place, Matth. vii. 21—23, where it is thus recorded: "Not every one who says Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father, which is in heaven." No rebels, or refractory disobedient, shall be admitted there, though they have so far believed in Jesus, as to be able to do miracles in his name; as is plain out of the following words: "Many will say to me in that day, Have we not prophesied in thy name, and in thy name have cast out devils, and in thy name have done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."

This part of the new covenant the apostles also, in their preaching the Gospel of the Messiah, ordinarily joined with the doctrine of faith.

St. Peter, in his first sermon, Acts ii., when they were pricked in heart, and asked, "What shall we do?"

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says, ver. 38, "Repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." The same he says to them again in his next speech, Acts iv. 26, "Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you." How was this done? "*in turning away every one from your iniquities.*"

The same doctrine they preach to the High Priest and rulers, Acts v. 30, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give *repentance* to Israel, and forgiveness of sins; and we are witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him."

Acts xvii. 30, St. Paul tells the Athenians, That now under the Gospel, "God commandeth all men every where to *repent.*"

Acts xx. 21, St. Paul, in his last conference with the elders of Ephesus, professes to have taught them the whole doctrine necessary to salvation: "I have," says he, "kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house; testifying both to the Jews and to the Greeks:" and then gives an account what his preaching had been, viz. "*Repentance* towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus the Messiah." This was the sum and substance of the Gospel which St. Paul preached, and was all that he knew necessary to salvation; viz. "Repentance, and believing Jesus to be the Messiah:" and so takes his last farewell of them, whom he should never see again, ver. 32, in these words: "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them that are sanctified." There is an inheritance conveyed by the word and covenant of grace, but it is only to those who are sanctified.

Acts xxiv. 24, "When Felix sent for Paul," that he and his wife Drusilla might hear him, "concerning the faith in Christ;" Paul reasoned of righteousness, or

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justice; and temperance; the duties we owe to others, and to ourselves; and of the judgment to come; until he made Felix to tremble. Whereby it appears, that "temperance and justice" were fundamental parts of the religion that Paul professed, and were contained in the faith which he preached. And if we find the duties of the moral law not pressed by him every where, we must remember, that most of his sermons left upon record were preached in their synagogues to the Jews, who acknowledged their obedience due to all the precepts of the law; and would have taken it amiss to have been suspected not to have been more zealous for the law than he. And therefore it was with reason that his discourses were directed chiefly to what they yet wanted, and were averse to, the knowledge and embracing of Jesus, their promised Messiah. But what his preaching generally was, if we will believe him himself, we may see Acts xxvi., where, giving an account to King Agrippa of his life and doctrine, he tells him, ver. 20, "I showed unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coasts of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance."

Thus we see, by the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, that he required of those who believed him to be the Messiah, and received him for their Lord and Deliverer, that they should live by his laws: and that (though in consideration of their becoming his subjects, by faith in him, whereby they believed and took him to be the Messiah, their former sins should be forgiven, yet) he would own none to be his, nor receive them as true denizens of the new Jerusalem, into the inheritance of eternal life; but leave them to the condemnation of the unrighteous; who renounced not their former miscarriages, and lived in a sincere obedience to his commands. What he expects from his followers, he has sufficiently declared as a legislator: and that they may not be deceived, by mistaking the doctrine of faith, grace, free-grace, and the pardon and forgiveness of sins, and salvation by him, (which

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was the great end of his coming) he more than once declares to them, for what omissions and miscarriages he shall judge and condemn to death, even those who have owned him, and done miracles in his name: when he comes at last to render to every one according to what he had *done* in the flesh, sitting upon his great and glorious tribunal, at the end of the world.

The first place where we find our Saviour to have mentioned the day of judgment is John v. 28, 29, in these words: "The hour is coming, in which all that are in their graves shall hear his [*i. e.* the Son of God's] voice, and shall come forth; they that have *done good*, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have *done evil*, unto the resurrection of damnation." That which puts the distinction, if we will believe our Saviour, is the having done good or evil. And he gives a reason of the necessity of his judging or condemning those "who have done evil," in the following words, ver. 30, "I can of myself do nothing. As I hear I judge; and my judgment is just; because I seek not my own will, but the will of my Father who hath sent me." He could not judge of himself; he had but a delegated power of judging from the Father, whose will he obeyed in it; and who was of purer eyes than to admit any unjust person into the kingdom of heaven.

Matth. vii. 22, 23, speaking again of that day, he tells what his sentence will be, "Depart from me, ye *workers* of iniquity." Faith, in the penitent and sincerely obedient, supplies the defect of their performances; and so by grace they are made just. But we may observe, none are sentenced or punished for unbelief, but only for their misdeeds. "They are workers of iniquity" on whom the sentence is pronounced.

Matth. xiii. 41, "At the end of the world, the Son of man shall send forth his angels; and they shall gather out of his kingdom all scandals, and them which *do iniquity*; and cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." And again, ver. 49, "The angels shall sever the *wicked* from among the *just*, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire."

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Matth. xvi. 24, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels: and then he shall reward every man according to his *works*."

Luke xiii. 26, "Then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drank in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not; depart from me, ye workers of iniquity."

Matth. xxv. 31—46, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations; he shall set the sheep on his right hand, and the goats on his left. Then shall the King say to them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? &c. And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Insomuch that ye did it not to one of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

These, I think, are all the places where our Saviour mentions the last judgment, or describes his way of proceeding in that great day; wherein, as we have observed, it is remarkable, that every where the sentence follows doing or not doing, without any mention of believing or not believing. Not that any, to whom the Gospel hath been preached, shall be saved, without be-

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lieving Jesus to be the Messiah: for all being sinners, and transgressors of the law, and so unjust, are all liable to condemnation; unless they believe, and so through grace are justified by God, for this faith, which shall be accounted to them for righteousness. But the rest wanting this cover, this allowance for their transgressions, must answer for all their actions; and being found transgressors of the law, shall, by the letter and sanction of that law, be condemned, for not having paid a full obedience to that law; and not for want of faith. That is not the guilt on which the punishment is laid; though it be the want of faith, which lays open their guilt uncovered; and exposes them to the sentence of the law, against all that are unrighteous.

The common objection here is, if all sinners shall be condemned, but such as have a gracious allowance made them; and so are justified by God, for believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and so taking him for their King, whom they are resolved to obey to the utmost of their power; "What shall become of all mankind, who lived before our Saviour's time, who never heard of his name, and consequently could not believe in him?" To this the answer is so obvious and natural, that one would wonder how any reasonable man should think it worth the urging. Nobody was, or can be required to believe, what was never proposed to him to believe. Before the fulness of time, which God from the counsel of his own wisdom had appointed to send his Son in, he had, at several times, and in different manners, promised to the people of Israel an extraordinary person to come; who, raised from amongst themselves, should be their Ruler and Deliverer. The time, and other circumstances of his birth, life, and person, he had in sundry prophecies so particularly described, and so plainly foretold, that he was well known, and expected by the Jews, under the name of the Messiah, or Anointed, given him in some of these prophecies. All then that was required, before his appearing in the world, was to believe what God had revealed, and to rely with a full assurance on God, for the performance

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of his promise; and to believe, that in due time he would send them the Messiah, this anointed King, this promised Saviour and Deliverer, according to his word. This faith in the promises of God, this relying and acquiescing in his word and faithfulness, the Almighty takes well at our hands, as a great mark of homage, paid by us poor frail creatures to his goodness and truth, as well as to his power and wisdom: and accepts it as an acknowledgment of his peculiar providence and benignity to us. And therefore our Saviour tells us, John xii. 44, "He that believes on me, believes not on me, but on him that sent me." The works of nature show his wisdom and power: but it is his peculiar care of mankind most eminently discovered in his promises to them, that shows his bounty and goodness; and consequently engages their hearts in love and affection to him. This oblation of a heart, fixed with dependence on, and affection to him, is the most acceptable tribute we can pay him, the foundation of true devotion, and life of all religion. What a value he puts on this depending on his word, and resting satisfied in his promises, we have an example in Abraham; whose faith "was counted to him for righteousness," as we have before remarked out of Rom. iv. And his relying firmly on the promise of God, without any doubt of its performance, gave him the name of the father of the faithful; and gained him so much favour with the Almighty, that he was called the "friend of God;" the highest and most glorious title that can be bestowed on a creature. The thing promised was no more but a son by his wife Sarah; and a numerous posterity by him, which should possess the land of Canaan. These were but temporal blessings, and (except the birth of a son) very remote, such as he should never live to see, nor in his own person have the benefit of. But because he questioned not the performance of it; but rested fully satisfied in the goodness, truth, and faithfulness of God, who had promised, it was counted to him for righteousness. Let us see how St. Paul expresses it, Rom. iv. 18—22, "Who, against hope, believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; ac-

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cording to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be. And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was above an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith: giving glory to God, and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able to perform. And *therefore* it was imputed to him for righteousness." St. Paul having here emphatically described the strength and firmness of Abraham's faith, informs us, that he thereby "gave glory to God;" and therefore it was "accounted to him for righteousness." This is the way that God deals with poor frail mortals. He is graciously pleased to take it well of them, and give it the place of righteousness, and a kind of merit in his sight, if they believe his promises, and have a stedfast relying on his veracity and goodness. St. Paul, Heb. xi. 6, tells us, "Without faith it is impossible to please God:" but at the same time tells us what faith that is. "For," says he, "he that cometh to God, must believe that he is; and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." He must be persuaded of God's mercy and good-will to those who seek to obey him; and rest assured of his rewarding those who rely on him, for whatever, either by the light of nature, or particular promises, he has revealed to them of his tender mercies, and taught them to expect from his bounty. This description of faith, (that we might not mistake what he means by that faith, without which we cannot please God, and which recommended the saints of old) St. Paul places in the middle of the list of those who were eminent for their faith; and whom he sets as patterns to the converted Hebrews, under persecution, to encourage them to persist in their confidence of deliverance by the coming of Jesus Christ, and in their belief of the promises they now had under the Gospel. By those examples he exhorts them not to "draw back" from the hope that was set before them, nor apostatize from the profession of the Christian religion. This is plain from ver. 35—38, of the precedent chapter:

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"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have great need of persisting or perseverance;" (for so the Greek word signifies here, which our translation renders "patience," vide Luke viii. 15) "that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith. But if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him."

The examples of faith, which St. Paul enumerates and proposes in the following words, chap. xi., plainly show, that the faith whereby those believers of old pleased God, was nothing but a stedfast reliance on the goodness and faithfulness of God, for those good things, which either the light of nature, or particular promises, had given them grounds to hope for. Of what avail this faith was with God, we may see, ver. 4, "By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain; by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." Ver. 5, "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." Ver. 7, "Noah being warned of God of things not seen as yet," being wary, "by faith prepared an ark, to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." And what it was that God so graciously accepted and rewarded, we are told, ver. 11, "Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child, when she was past age." How she came to obtain this grace from God, the apostle tells us, "Because she judged him faithful who had promised." Those therefore, who pleased God, and were accepted by him before the coming of Christ, did it only by believing the promises, and relying on the goodness of God, as far as he had revealed it to them. For the apostle, in the following words, tells us, ver. 13, "These all died in faith, not having received (the accomplishment of) the promises; but having seen them afar off: and were persuaded of them, and

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embraced them." This was all that was required of them; to be persuaded of, and embrace the promises which they had. They could be "persuaded of" no more than was proposed to them; "embrace" no more than was revealed; according to the promises they had received, and the dispensations they were under. And if the faith of things "seen afar off;" if their trusting in God for the promises he then gave them; if a belief of the Messiah to come; were sufficient to render those who lived in the ages before Christ acceptable to God, and righteous before him: I desire those who tell us, that God will not (nay, some go so far as to say, cannot) accept any, who do not believe every article of their particular creeds and systems, to consider, why God, out of his infinite mercy, cannot as well justify men now, for believing Jesus of Nazareth to be the promised Messiah, the King and Deliverer; as those heretofore, who believed only that God would, according to his promise, in due time, send the Messiah, to be a King and Deliverer?

There is another difficulty often to be met with, which seems to have something of more weight in it: and that is, that "though the faith of those before Christ, (believing that God would send the Messiah, to be a Prince and a Saviour to his people, as he had promised) and the faith of those since his time, (believing Jesus to be that Messiah, promised and sent by God) shall be accounted to them for righteousness; yet what shall become of all the rest of mankind, who, having never heard of the promise or news of a Saviour; not a word of a Messiah to be sent, or that was come; have had no thought or belief concerning him?"

To this I answer, that God will require of every man, "according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not." He will not expect the improvement of ten talents, where he gave but one; nor require any one should believe a promise of which he has never heard. The apostle's reasoning, Rom. x. 14, is very just: "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?" But though there be many,

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who being strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, were also strangers to the oracles of God, committed to that people; many, to whom the promise of the Messiah never came, and so were never in a capacity to believe or reject that revelation; yet God had, by the light of reason, revealed to all mankind, who would make use of that light, that he was good and merciful. The same spark of the divine nature and knowledge in man, which, making him a man, showed him the law he was under, as a man; showed him also the way of atoning the merciful, kind, compassionate Author and Father of him and his being, when he had transgressed that law. He that made use of this candle of the Lord, so far as to find what was his duty, could not miss to find also the way to reconciliation and forgiveness, when he had failed of his duty: though, if he used not his reason this way, if he put out or neglected this light, he might, perhaps, see neither.

The law is the eternal, immutable standard of right. And a part of that law is, that a man should forgive, not only his children, but his enemies, upon their repentance, asking pardon, and amendment. And therefore he could not doubt that the author of this law, and God of patience and consolation, who is rich in mercy, would forgive his frail offspring, if they acknowledged their faults, disapproved the iniquity of their transgressions, begged his pardon, and resolved in earnest, for the future, to conform their actions to this rule, which they owned to be just and right. This way of reconciliation, this hope of atonement, the light of nature revealed to them: and the revelation of the Gospel, having said nothing to the contrary, leaves them to stand and fall to their own Father and Master, whose goodness and mercy is over all his works.

I know some are forward to urge that place of the Acts, chap. iv. as contrary to this. The words, ver. 10 and 12, stand thus: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him, doth this man"

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[*i. e.* the lame man restored by Peter] "stand here before you whole. This is the stone which is set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, in which we must be saved." Which, in short, is, that Jesus is the only true Messiah, neither is there any other person, but he, given to be a mediator between God and man; in whose name we may ask, and hope for salvation.

It will here possibly be asked, "Quorsum perditio hæc?" What need was there of a Saviour? What advantage have we by Jesus Christ?

It is enough to justify the fitness of any thing to be done, by resolving it into the "wisdom of God," who has done it; though our short views, and narrow understandings, may utterly incapacitate us to see that wisdom, and to judge rightly of it. We know little of this visible, and nothing at all of the state of that intellectual world, wherein are infinite numbers and degrees of spirits out of the reach of our ken, or guess; and therefore know not what transactions there were between God and our Saviour, in reference to his kingdom. We know not what need there was to set up a head and a chieftain, in opposition to "the prince of this world, the prince of the power of the air," &c. whereof there are more than obscure intimations in Scripture. And we shall take too much upon us, if we shall call God's wisdom or providence to account, and pertly condemn for needless, all that our weak, and perhaps biassed, understanding cannot account for.

Though this general answer be reply enough to the forementioned demand, and such as a rational man, or fair searcher after truth, will acquiesce in; yet in this particular case, the wisdom and goodness of God has shown itself so visibly to common apprehensions, that it hath furnished us abundantly wherewithal to satisfy the curious and inquisitive; who will not take a blessing, unless they be instructed what need they had of it, and why it was bestowed upon them. The great and many

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advantages we receive by the coming of Jesus the Messiah will show, that it was not without need that he was sent into the world.

The evidence of our Saviour's mission from heaven is so great, in the multitude of miracles he did before all sorts of people, that what he delivered cannot but be received as the oracles of God, and unquestionable verity. For the miracles he did were so ordered by the divine providence and wisdom, that they never were, nor could be denied by any of the enemies or opposers of Christianity.

Though the works of nature, in every part of them, sufficiently evidence a Deity; yet the world made so little use of their reason, that they saw him not, where, even by the impressions of himself, he was easy to be found. Sense and lust blinded their minds in some, and a careless inadvertency in others, and fearful apprehensions in most (who either believed there were, or could not but suspect there might be, superior unknown beings) gave them up into the hands of their priests, to fill their heads with false notions of the Deity, and their worship with foolish rites, as they pleased: and what dread or craft once began, devotion soon made sacred, and religion immutable. In this state of darkness and ignorance of the true God, vice and superstition held the world. Nor could any help be had or hoped for from reason; which could not be heard, and was judged to have nothing to do in the case; the priests, every where, to secure their empire, having excluded reason from having any thing to do in religion. And in the crowd of wrong notions, and invented rites, the world had almost lost the sight of the one only true God. The rational and thinking part of mankind, it is true, when they sought after him, they found the one supreme, invisible God; but if they acknowledged and worshipped him, it was only in their own minds. They kept this truth locked up in their own breasts as a secret, nor ever durst venture it amongst the people; much less amongst the priests, those wary guardians of their own creeds and profitable inventions. Hence we see, that reason, speaking ever so clearly to the wise and virtuous, had never authority enough to prevail on the multitude; and to

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persuade the societies of men, that there was but one God, that alone was to be owned and worshipped. The belief and worship of one God was the national religion of the Israelites alone: and if we will consider it, it was introduced and supported amongst the people by revelation. They were in Goshen, and had light, whilst the rest of the world were in almost Egyptian darkness, "without God in the world." There was no part of mankind, who had quicker parts, or improved them more; that had a greater light of reason, or followed it farther in all sorts of speculations, than the Athenians: and yet we find but one Socrates amongst them, that opposed and laughed at their polytheism, and wrong opinions of the Deity; and we see how they rewarded him for it. Whatsoever Plato, and the soberest of the philosophers, thought of the nature and being of the one God, they were fain, in their outward professions and worship, to go with the herd, and keep to the religion established by law: which what it was, and how it had disposed the minds of these knowing and quick-sighted Grecians, St. Paul tells us, Acts xvii. 22—29. "Ye men of Athens," says he, "I perceive, that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you. God that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands: neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing that he giveth unto all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all the nations of men, for to dwell on the face of the earth; and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel him out and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." Here he tells the Athenians, that they, and the rest of the world (given up to superstition) whatever light there was in the works of creation and providence, to lead them to the true God; yet few of them found him.

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He was every where near them; yet they were but like people groping and feeling for something in the dark, and did not see him with a full and clear daylight; "But thought the Godhead like to gold and silver, and stone, graven by art and man's device."

In this state of darkness and error, in reference to the "true God," our Saviour found the world. But the clear revelation he brought with him dissipated this darkness; made the "one invisible true God" known to the world: and that with such evidence and energy, that polytheism and idolatry have nowhere been able to withstand it: but wherever the preaching of the truth he delivered, and the light of the Gospel hath come, those mists have been dispelled. And, in effect, we see, that since our Saviour's time, the "belief of one God" has prevailed and spread itself over the face of the earth. For even to the light that the Messiah brought into the world with him, we must ascribe the owning and profession of one God, which the Mahometan religion hath derived and borrowed from it. So that in this sense it is certainly and manifestly true of our Saviour, what St. John says of him, 1 John iii. 8, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." This light the world needed, and this light is received from him: that there is but "one God," and he "eternal, invisible;" not like to any visible objects, nor to be represented by them.

If it be asked, whether the revelation to the patriarchs by Moses did not teach this, and why that was not enough? The answer is obvious; that however clearly the knowledge of one invisible God, Maker of heaven and earth, was revealed to them; yet that revelation was shut up in a little corner of the world; amongst a people, by that very law, which they received with it, excluded from a commerce and communication with the rest of mankind. The Gentile world, in our Saviour's time, and several ages before, could have no attestation of the miracles on which the Hebrews built their faith, but from the Jews themselves, a people not known to the greatest part of mankind; contemned

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and thought vilely of, by those nations that did know them; and therefore very unfit and unable to propagate the doctrine of one God in the world, and diffuse it through the nations of the earth, by the strength and force of that ancient revelation, upon which they had received it. But our Saviour, when he came, threw down this wall of partition; and did not confine his miracles or message to the land of Canaan, or the worshippers at Jerusalem. But he himself preached at Samaria, and did miracles in the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and before multitudes of people gathered from all quarters. And after his resurrection, sent his apostles amongst the nations, accompanied with miracles; which were done in all parts so frequently, and before so many witnesses of all sorts, in broad daylight, that, as I have before observed, the enemies of Christianity have never dared to deny them; no, not Julian himself: who neither wanted skill nor power to inquire into the truth; nor would have failed to have proclaimed and exposed it, if he could have detected any falsehood in the history of the Gospel; or found the least ground to question the matter of fact published of Christ and his apostles. The number and evidence of the miracles done by our Saviour and his followers, by the power and force of truth, bore down this mighty and accomplished emperor, and all his parts, in his own dominions. He durst not deny so plain a matter of fact, which being granted, the truth of our Saviour's doctrine and mission unavoidably follows; notwithstanding whatsoever artful suggestions his wit could invent, or malice should offer to the contrary.

Next to the knowledge of one God, Maker of all things, "a clear knowledge of their duty was wanting to mankind." This part of knowledge, though cultivated with some care by some of the heathen philosophers, yet got little footing among the people. All men, indeed, under pain of displeasing the gods, were to frequent the temples: every one went to their sacrifices and services: but the priests made it not their business to teach them virtue. If they were diligent in their observations and ceremonies; punctual

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in their feasts and solemnities, and the tricks of religion; the holy tribe assured them the gods were pleased, and they looked no farther. Few went to the schools of the philosophers to be instructed in their duties, and to know what was good and evil in their actions. The priests sold the better pennyworths, and therefore had all the custom. Lustrations and processions were much easier than a clean conscience, and a steady course of virtue; and an expiatory sacrifice, that atoned for the want of it, was much more convenient than a strict and holy life. No wonder then, that religion was every where distinguished from, and preferred to virtue; and that it was dangerous heresy and profaneness to think the contrary. So much virtue as was necessary to hold societies together, and to contribute to the quiet of governments, the civil laws of commonwealths taught, and forced upon men that lived under magistrates. But these laws being for the most part made by such, who had no other aims but their own power, reached no farther than those things that would serve to tie men together in subjection; or at most were directly to conduce to the prosperity and temporal happiness of any people. But natural religion, in its full extent, was nowhere, that I know, taken care of, by the force of natural reason. It should seem, by the little that has hitherto been done in it, that it is too hard a task for unassisted reason to establish morality in all its parts, upon its true foundation, with a clear and convincing light. And it is at least a surer and shorter way, to the apprehensions of the vulgar, and mass of mankind, that one manifestly sent from God, and coming with visible authority from him, should, as a king and law-maker, tell them their duties, and require their obedience, than leave it to the long and sometimes intricate deductions of reason, to be made out to them. Such trains of reasoning the greatest part of mankind have neither leisure to weigh, nor, for want of education and use, skill to judge of. We see how unsuccessful in this the attempts of philosophers were before our Saviour's time. How short their several systems came of the perfection of a true and complete morality, is

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very visible. And if, since that, the Christian philosophers have much outdone them; yet we may observe, that the first knowledge of the truths they have added is owing to revelation: though as soon as they are heard and considered, they are found to be agreeable to reason; and such as can by no means be contradicted. Every one may observe a great many truths, which he receives at first from others, and readily assents to, as consonant to reason, which he would have found it hard, and perhaps beyond his strength, to have discovered himself. Native and original truth is not so easily wrought out of the mine as we, who have it delivered already dug and fashioned into our hands, are apt to imagine. And how often at fifty or threescore years old are thinking men told what they wonder how they could miss thinking of? which yet their own contemplations did not, and possibly never would have helped them to. Experience shows, that the knowledge of morality, by mere natural light, (how agreeable soever it be to it) makes but a slow progress, and little advance in the world. And the reason of it is not hard to be found in men's necessities, passions, vices, and mistaken interests; which turn their thoughts another way: and the designing leaders, as well as following herd, find it not to their purpose to employ much of their meditations this way. Or whatever else was the cause, it is plain, in fact, that human reason unassisted failed men in its great and proper business of morality. It never from unquestionable principles, by clear deductions, made out an entire body of the "law of nature." And he that shall collect all the moral rules of the philosophers, and compare them with those contained in the New Testament, will find them to come short of the morality delivered by our Saviour, and taught by his apostles; a college made up, for the most part, of ignorant, but inspired fishermen.

Though yet, if any one should think, that out of the sayings of the wise heathens before our Saviour's time, there might be a collection made of all those rules of morality, which are to be found in the Christian religion; yet this would not at all hinder, but that the

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world, nevertheless, stood as much in need of our Saviour, and the morality delivered by him. Let it be granted (though not true) that all the moral precepts of the Gospel were known by somebody or other, amongst mankind before. But where, or how, or of what use, is not considered. Suppose they may be picked up here and there; some from Solon and Bias in Greece, others from Tully in Italy: and to complete the work, let Confucius, as far as China, be consulted; and Anacharsis, the Scythian, contribute his share. What will all this do, to give the world a complete morality, that may be to mankind the unquestionable rule of life and manners? I will not here urge the impossibility of collecting from men, so far distant from one another, in time and place, and languages. I will suppose there was a Stobeus in those times, who had gathered the moral sayings from all the sages of the world. What would this amount to, towards being a steady rule, a certain transcript of a law that we are under? Did the saying of Aristippus, or Confucius, give it an authority? Was Zeno a lawgiver to mankind? If not, what he or any other philosopher delivered, was but a saying of his. Mankind might hearken to it, or reject it, as they pleased; or as it suited their interest, passions, principles, or humours. They were under no obligation; the opinion of this or that philosopher was of no authority. And if it were, you must take all he said under the same character. All his dictates must go for law, certain and true; or none of them. And then, if you will take any of the moral sayings of Epicurus (many whereof Seneca quotes with esteem and approbation) for precepts of the law of nature, you must take all the rest of his doctrine for such too; or else his authority ceases: and so no more is to be received from him, or any of the sages of old, for parts of the law of nature, as carrying with it an obligation to be obeyed, but what they prove to be so. But such a body of ethics, proved to be the law of nature, from principles of reason, and teaching all the duties of life; I think nobody will say the world had before our Saviour's time. It is not enough, that there were up and down scattered sayings of wise men, con-

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formable to right reason. The law of nature is the law of convenience too: and it is no wonder, that those men of parts, and studious of virtue (who had occasion to think on any particular part of it) should, by meditation, light on the right, even from the observable convenience and beauty of it; without making out its obligation from the true principles of the law of nature, and foundations of morality. But these incoherent apophthegms of philosophers, and wise men, however excellent in themselves, and well intended by them; could never make a morality, whereof the world could be convinced; could never rise to the force of a law, that mankind could with certainty depend on. Whatsoever should thus be universally useful, as a standard to which men should conform their manners, must have its authority, either from reason or revelation. It is not every writer of morality, or compiler of it from others, that can thereby be erected into a lawgiver to mankind; and a dictator of rules, which are therefore valid, because they are to be found in his books; under the authority of this or that philosopher. He, that any one will pretend to set up in this kind, and have his rules pass for authentic directions, must show, that either he builds his doctrine upon principles of reason, self-evident in themselves; and that he deduces all the parts of it from thence, by clear and evident demonstration: or must show his commission from heaven, that he comes with authority from God, to deliver his will and commands to the world. In the former way, nobody that I know, before our Saviour's time, ever did, or went about to give us a morality. It is true, there is a law of nature: but who is there that ever did, or undertook to give it us all entire, as a law; no more, nor no less, than what was contained in, and had the obligation of that law? Who ever made out all the parts of it, put them together, and showed the world their obligation? Where was there any such code, that mankind might have recourse to, as their unerring rule, before our Saviour's time? If there was not, it is plain there was need of one to give us such a morality; such a law, which might be the sure guide of those who had a desire

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to go right; and, if they had a mind, need not mistake their duty, but might be certain when they had performed, when failed in it. Such a law of morality Jesus Christ hath given us in the New Testament; but by the latter of these ways, by revelation. We have from him a full and sufficient rule for our direction, and conformable to that of reason. But the truth and obligation of its precepts have their force, and are put past doubt to us, by the evidence of his mission. He was sent by God: his miracles show it; and the authority of God in his precepts cannot be questioned. Here morality has a sure standard, that revelation vouches, and reason cannot gainsay, nor question; but both together witness to come from God, the great law-maker. And such an one as this, out of the New Testament, I think the world never had, nor can any one say, is any where else to be found. Let me ask any one, who is forward to think that the doctrine of morality was full and clear in the world, at our Saviour's birth; whither would he have directed Brutus and Cassius, (both men of parts and virtue, the one whereof believed, and the other disbelieved a future being) to be satisfied in the rules and obligations of all the parts of their duties; if they should have asked him, Where they might find the law they were to live by, and by which they should be charged, or acquitted, as guilty, or innocent? If to the sayings of the wise, and the declarations of philosophers, he sends them into a wild wood of uncertainty, to an endless maze, from which they should never get out: if to the religions of the world, yet worse: and if to their own reason, he refers them to that which had some light and certainty; but yet had hitherto failed all mankind in a perfect rule; and, we see, resolved not the doubts that had risen amongst the studious and thinking philosophers; nor had yet been able to convince the civilized parts of the world, that they had not given, nor could, without a crime, take away the lives of their children, by exposing them.

If any one shall think to excuse human nature, by laying blame on men's negligence, that they did not carry morality to a higher pitch; and make it out en-

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tire in every part, with that clearness of demonstration which some think it capable of; he helps not the matter. Be the cause what it will, our Saviour found mankind under a corruption of manners and principles, which ages after ages had prevailed, and must be confessed, was not in a way or tendency to be mended. The rules of morality were in different countries and sects different. And natural reason nowhere had cured, nor was like to cure the defects and errors in them. Those just measures of right and wrong, which necessity had any where introduced, the civil laws prescribed, or philosophy recommended, stood on their true foundations. They were looked on as bonds of society, and conveniencies of common life, and laudable practices. But where was it that their obligation was thoroughly known and allowed, and they received as precepts of a law; of the highest law, the law of nature? That could not be, without a clear knowledge and acknowledgment of the law-maker, and the great rewards and punishments for those that would or would not obey him. But the religion of the heathens, as was before observed, little concerned itself in their morals. The priests, that delivered the oracles of heaven, and pretended to speak from the gods, spoke little of virtue and a good life. And, on the other side, the philosophers, who spoke from reason, made not much mention of the Deity in their ethics. They depended on reason and her oracles, which contain nothing but truth: but yet some parts of that truth lie too deep for our natural powers easily to reach, and make plain and visible to mankind; without some light from above to direct them. When truths are once known to us, though by tradition, we are apt to be favourable to our own parts; and ascribe to our own understandings the discovery of what, in reality, we borrowed from others: or, at least, finding we can prove, what at first we learn from others, we are forward to conclude it an obvious truth, which, if we had sought, we could not have missed. Nothing seems hard to our understandings that is once known: and because what we see, we see with our own eyes; we are apt to overlook, or forget the help we had from others

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who showed it us, and first made us see it; as if we were not at all beholden to them, for those truths they opened the way to, and led us into. For knowledge being only of truths that are perceived to be so, we are favourable enough to our own faculties to conclude, that they of their own strength would have attained those discoveries, without any foreign assistance; and that we know those truths, by the strength and native light of our own minds, as they did from whom we received them by theirs, only they had the luck to be before us. Thus the whole stock of human knowledge is claimed by every one, as his private possession, as soon as he (profiting by others' discoveries) has got it into his own mind: and so it is; but not properly by his own single industry, nor of his own acquisition. He studies, it is true, and takes pains to make a progress in what others have delivered: but their pains were of another sort, who first brought those truths to light, which he afterwards derives from them. He that travels the roads now, applauds his own strength and legs that have carried him so far in such a scantling of time, and ascribes all to his own vigour; little considering how much he owes to their pains, who cleared the woods, drained the bogs, built the bridges, and made the ways passable; without which he might have toiled much with little progress. A great many things which we have been bred up in the belief of, from our cradles, (and are notions grown familiar, and, as it were, natural to us, under the Gospel) we take for unquestionable obvious truths, and easily demonstrable; without considering how long we might have been in doubt or ignorance of them, had revelation been silent. And many are beholden to revelation, who do not acknowledge it. It is no diminishing to revelation, that reason gives its suffrage too to the truths revelation has discovered. But it is our mistake to think, that because reason confirms them to us, we had the first certain knowledge of them from thence; and in that clear evidence we now possess them. The contrary is manifest, in the defective morality of the Gentiles, before our Saviour's time; and the want of reformation in the principles and measures of it, as well as practice. Philosophy seemed to

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have spent its strength, and done its utmost: or if it should have gone farther, as we see it did not, and from undeniable principles given us ethics in a science like mathematics, in every part demonstrable; this yet would not have been so effectual to man in this imperfect state, nor proper for the cure. The greatest part of mankind want leisure or capacity for demonstration; nor can carry a train of proofs, which in that way they must always depend upon for conviction, and cannot be required to assent to, until they see the demonstration. Wherever they stick, the teachers are always put upon proof, and must clear the doubt by a thread of coherent deductions from the first principle, how long, or how intricate soever they be. And you may as soon hope to have all the day-labourers and tradesmen, the spinsters and dairy-maids, perfect mathematicians, as to have them perfect in ethics this way. Hearing plain commands is the sure and only course to bring them to obedience and practice. The greatest part cannot know, and therefore they must believe. And I ask, whether one coming from heaven in the power of God, in full and clear evidence and demonstration of miracles, giving plain and direct rules of morality and obedience; be not likelier to enlighten the bulk of mankind, and set them right in their duties, and bring them to do them, than by reasoning with them from general notions and principles of human reason? And were all the duties of human life clearly demonstrated, yet I conclude, when well considered, that method of teaching men their duties would be thought proper only for a few, who had much leisure, improved understandings, and were used to abstract reasonings. But the instruction of the people were best still to be left to the precepts and principles of the Gospel. The healing of the sick, the restoring sight to the blind by a word, the raising and being raised from the dead, are matters of fact, which they can without difficulty conceive, and that he who does such things, must do them by the assistance of a divine power. These things lie level to the ordinariest apprehension: he that can distinguish between sick and well, lame and sound, dead and alive, is capable of this doctrine. To one who is once persuaded that Jesus

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Christ was sent by God to be a King, and a Saviour of those who do believe in him; all his commands become principles; there needs no other proof for the truth of what he says, but that he said it. And then there needs no more, but to read the inspired books, to be instructed: all the duties of morality lie there clear, and plain, and easy to be understood. And here I appeal, whether this be not the surest, the safest, and most effectual way of teaching: especially if we add this farther consideration, that as it suits the lowest capacities of reasonable creatures, so it reaches and satisfies, nay, enlightens the highest. The most elevated understandings cannot but submit to the authority of this doctrine as divine; which coming from the mouths of a company of illiterate men, hath not only the attestation of miracles, but reason to confirm it: since they delivered no precepts but such, as though reason of itself had not clearly made out, yet it could not but assent to, when thus discovered, and think itself indebted for the discovery. The credit and authority our Saviour and his apostles had over the minds of men, by the miracles they did, tempted them not to mix (as we find in that of all the sects and philosophers, and other religions) any conceits, any wrong rules, any thing tending to their own by-interest, or that of a party, in their morality. No tang of prepossession, or fancy; no footsteps of pride, or vanity; no touch of ostentation or ambition; appears to have a hand in it. It is all pure, all sincere; nothing too much, nothing wanting; but such a complete rule of life, as the wisest men must acknowledge tends entirely to the good of mankind, and that all would be happy, if all would practise it.

3. The outward forms of worshipping the Deity wanted a reformation. Stately buildings, costly ornaments, peculiar and uncouth habits, and a numerous huddle of pompous, fantastical, cumbersome ceremonies, every where attended divine worship. This, as it had the peculiar name, so it was thought the principal part, if not the whole of religion. Nor could this, possibly, be amended, whilst the Jewish ritual stood; and there was so much of it mixed with the worship of the true God. To this also our Saviour, with the knowledge of the infinite, invisible, supreme Spirit, brought

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a remedy, in a plain, spiritual, and suitable worship. Jesus says to the woman of Samaria, "The hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the true worshippers shall worship the Father both in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him." To be worshipped in spirit and truth, with application of mind and sincerity of heart, was what God henceforth only required. Magnificent temples, and confinement to certain places, were now no longer necessary for his worship, which by a pure heart might be performed any where. The splendour and distinction of habits, and pomp of ceremonies, and all outside performances, might now be spared. God, who was a spirit, and made known to be so, required none of those, but the spirit only; and that in public assemblies, (where some actions must lie open to the view of the world) all that could appear and be seen, should be done decently, and in order, and to edification. Decency, order, and edification, were to regulate all their public acts of worship, and beyond what these required, the outward appearance (which was of little value in the eyes of God) was not to go. Having shut indecency and confusion out of their assemblies, they need not be solicitous about useless ceremonies. Praises and prayer, humbly offered up to the Deity, were the worship he now demanded; and in these every one was to look after his own heart, and to know that it was that alone which God had regard to, and accepted.

4. Another great advantage received by our Saviour, is the great encouragement he brought to a virtuous and pious life; great enough to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that lie in the way to it, and reward the pains and hardships of those who stuck firm to their duties, and suffered for the testimony of a good conscience. The portion of the righteous has been in all ages taken notice of, to be pretty scanty in this world. Virtue and prosperity do not often accompany one another; and therefore virtue seldom had many followers. And it is no wonder she prevailed not much in a state, where the inconveniencies that attended her were visible, and at hand; and the rewards doubtful, and at a

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distance. Mankind, who are and must be allowed to pursue their happiness, nay, cannot be hindered; could not but think themselves excused from a strict observation of rules, which appeared so little to consist of their chief end, happiness; whilst they kept them from the enjoyments of this life; and they had little evidence and security of another. It is true they might have argued the other way, and concluded, That, because the good were most of them ill-treated here, there was another place where they should meet with better usage; but it is plain they did not: their thoughts of another life were at best obscure, and their expectations uncertain. Of manes, and ghosts, and the shades of departed men, there was some talk; but little certain, and less minded. They had the names of Styx and Acheron, of Elysian fields, and seats of the blessed: but they had them generally from their poets, mixed with their fables. And so they looked more like the inventions of wit, and ornaments of poetry, than the serious persuasions of the grave and the sober. They came to them bundled up among their tales, and for tales they took them. And that which rendered them more suspected, and less useful to virtue, was, that the philosophers seldom set their rules on men's minds and practices by consideration of another life. The chief of their arguments were from the excellency of virtue; and the highest they generaluty went, was the exalting of human nature, whose perfection lay in virtue. And if the priest at any time talked of the ghosts below, and a life after this; it was only to keep men to their superstitious and idolatrous rites; whereby the use of this doctrine was lost to the credulous multitude, and its belief to the quicker-sighted; who suspected it presently of priestcraft. Before our Saviour's time, the doctrine of a future state, though it were not wholly hid, yet it was not clearly known in the world. It was an imperfect view of reason, or, perhaps, the decayed remains of an ancient tradition, which seemed rather to float on men's fancies, than sink deep into their hearts. It was something, they knew not what, between being and not being. Something in a man they imagined might escape

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the grave; but a perfect complete life, of an eternal duration, after this, was what entered little into their thoughts, and less into their persuasions. And they were so far from being clear herein, that we see no nation of the world publicly professed it, and built upon it: no religion taught it; and it was nowhere made an article of faith and principle of religion until Jesus Christ came; of whom it is truly said, that he, at his appearing, "brought life and immortality to light." And that not only in the clear revelation of it, and in instances shown of men raised from the dead; but he has given us an unquestionable assurance and pledge of it in his own resurrection and ascension into heaven. How has this one truth changed the nature of things in the world, and given the advantage to piety over all that could tempt or deter men from it! The philosophers, indeed, showed the beauty of virtue; they set her off so, as drew men's eyes and approbation to her; but leaving her unendowed, very few were willing to espouse her. The generality could not refuse her their esteem and commendation; but still turned their backs on her, and forsook her, as a match not for their turn. But now there being put into the scales on her side, "an exceeding and immortal weight of glory;" interest is come about to her, and virtue now is visibly the most enriching purchase, and by much the best bargain. That she is the perfection and excellency of our nature; that she is herself a reward, and will recommend our names to future ages, is not all that can now be said of her. It is not strange that the learned heathens satisfied not many with such airy commendations. It has another relish and efficacy to persuade men, that if they live well here, they shall be happy hereafter. Open their eyes upon the endless, unspeakable joys of another life, and their hearts will find something solid and powerful to move them. The view of heaven and hell will cast a slight upon the short pleasures and pains of this present state, and give attractions and encouragements to virtue, which reason and interest, and the care of ourselves, cannot but allow and prefer. Upon this foundation, and upon this only, morality stands firm, and

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may defy all competition. This makes it more than a name; a substantial good, worth all our aims and endeavours; and thus the Gospel of Jesus Christ has delivered it to us.

5. To these I must add one advantage more by Jesus Christ, and that is the promise of assistance. If we do what we can, he will give us his Spirit to help us to do what, and how we should. It will be idle for us, who know not how our own spirits move and act us, to ask in what manner the Spirit of God shall work upon us. The wisdom that accompanies that Spirit knows better than we how we are made, and how to work upon us. If a wise man knows how to prevail on his child, to bring him to what he desires; can we suspect that the spirit and wisdom of God should fail in it; though we perceive or comprehend not the ways of his operation? Christ has promised it, who is faithful and just; and we cannot doubt of the performance. It is not requisite on this occasion, for the enhancing of this benefit, to enlarge on the frailty of our minds, and weakness of our constitutions; how liable to mistakes, how apt to go astray, and how easily to be turned out of the paths of virtue. If any one needs go beyond himself, and the testimony of his own conscience in this point; if he feels not his own errors and passions always tempting, and often prevailing, against the strict rules of his duty; he need but look abroad into any stage of the world, to be convinced. To a man under the difficulties of his nature, beset with temptations, and hedged in with prevailing custom; it is no small encouragement to set himself seriously on the courses of virtue, and practice of true religion; that he is from a sure hand, and an Almighty arm, promised assistance to support and carry him through.

There remains yet something to be said to those who will be ready to object, "If the belief of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, together with those concomitant articles of his resurrection, rule, and coming again to judge the world, be all the faith required, as necessary to justification; to what purpose were the epistles written; I say, if the belief of those many

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doctrines contained in them be not also necessary to salvation; and what is there delivered a Christian may believe or disbelieve, and yet, nevertheless, be a member of Christ's Church, and one of the faithful?"

To this I answer, that the epistles are written upon several occasions: and he that will read them as he ought, must observe what it is in them which is principally aimed at; find what is the argument in hand, and how managed; if he will understand them right, and profit by them. The observing of this will best help us to the true meaning and mind of the writer: for that is the truth which is to be received and believed; and not scattered sentences in Scripture-language, accommodated to our notions and prejudices. We must look into the drift of the discourse, observe the coherence and connexion of the parts, and see how it is consistent with itself and other parts of Scripture; if we will conceive it right. We must not cull out, as best suits our system, here and there a period or verse; as if they were all distinct and independent aphorisms; and make these the fundamental articles of the Christian faith, and necessary to salvation; unless God has made them so. There be many truths in the Bible, which a good Christian may be wholly ignorant of, and so not believe; which, perhaps, some lay great stress on and call fundamental articles, because they are the distinguishing points of their communion. The epistles, most of them, carry on a thread of argument, which, in the style they are writ, cannot every where be observed without great attention, and to consider the texts as they stand, and bear a part in that, is to view them in their due light, and the way to get the true sense of them. They were writ to those who were in the faith, and true Christians already: and so could not be designed to teach them the fundamental articles and points necessary to salvation. The epistle to the Romans was writ to all "that were at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints, whose faith was spoken of through the world," chap. i. 7, 8. To whom St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians was, he shows chap. i. 2, 4, &c. "Unto the church of God, which is at Corinth,

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to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints; with all them that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; that in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge: even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you. So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And so likewise the second was, "To the church of God at Corinth, with all the saints in Achaia," chap. i. 1. His next is to the churches of Galatia. That to the Ephesians was, "To the saints that were at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus." So likewise, "To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ at Colosse, who had faith in Christ Jesus, and love to the saints. To the church of the Thessalonians. To Timothy his son in the faith. To Titus his own son after the common faith. To Philemon his dearly beloved, and fellow labourer." And the author to the Hebrews calls those he writes to "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling," chap. iii. 1. From whence it is evident, that all those whom St. Paul writ to were brethren, saints, faithful in the church, and so Christians already; and, therefore, wanted not the fundamental articles of the Christian religion, without a belief of which they could not be saved; nor can it be supposed, that the sending of such fundamentals was the reason of the apostle's writing to any of them. To such also St. Peter writes, as is plain from the first chapter of each of his epistles. Nor is it hard to observe the like in St. James's and St. John's epistles. And St. Jude directs his thus: "To them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called." The epistles therefore, being all written to those who were already believers and Christians, the occasion and end of writing them could not be to instruct them in that which was necessary to make them Christians. This, it is plain, they knew and believed already; or else they could not have been Christians and believers. And they were writ

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upon particular occasions; and without those occasions had not been writ; and so cannot be thought necessary to salvation: though they resolving doubts, and reforming mistakes, are of great advantage to our knowledge and practice. I do not deny, but the great doctrines of the Christian faith are dropt here and there, and scattered up and down in most of them. But it is not in the epistles we are to learn what are the fundamental articles of faith, where they are promiscuously and without distinction mixed with other truths, in discourses that were (though for edification, indeed, yet) only occasional. We shall find and discern those great and necessary points best, in the preaching of our Saviour and the apostles, to those who were yet strangers, and ignorant of the faith; to bring them in, and convert them to it. And what that was, we have seen already out of the history of the evangelists, and the Acts; where they are plainly laid down, so that nobody can mistake them. The epistles to particular churches, besides the main argument of each of them, (which was some present concernment of that particular church, to which they severally were addressed) do in many places explain the fundamentals of the Christian religion, and that wisely; by proper accommodations to the apprehensions of those they were writ to; the better to make them imbibe the Christian doctrine, and the more easily to comprehend the method, reasons, and grounds of the great work of salvation. Thus we see, in the epistle to the Romans, adoption (a custom well known amongst those of Rome) is much made use of, to explain to them the grace and favour of God, in giving them eternal life; to help them to conceive how they became the children of God, and to assure them of a share in the kingdom of heaven, as heirs to an inheritance. Whereas the setting out, and confirming the Christian faith to the Hebrews, in the epistle to them, is by allusions and arguments, from the ceremonies, sacrifices, and economy of the Jews, and references to the records of the Old Testament. And as for the general epistles, they, we may see, regard the state and exigencies, and some peculiarities of those times. These holy writers, in-

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spired from above, writ nothing but truth; and in most places, very weighty truths to us now; for the expounding, clearing, and confirming of the Christian doctrine, and establishing those in it who had embraced it. But yet every sentence of theirs must not be taken up, and looked on as a fundamental article, necessary to salvation; without an explicit belief whereof, nobody could be a member of Christ's church here, nor be admitted into his eternal kingdom hereafter. If all, or most of the truths declared in the epistles, were to be received and believed as fundamental articles, what then became of those Christians who were fallen asleep (as St. Paul witnesses in his first to the Corinthians, many were) before these things in the epistles were revealed to them? Most of the epistles not being written till above twenty years after our Saviour's ascension, and some after thirty.

But farther, therefore, to those who will be ready to say, "May those truths delivered in the epistles, which are not contained in the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, and are therefore, by this account, not necessary to salvation; be believed, or disbelieved without any danger? May a Christian safely question or doubt of them?"

To this I answer, That the law of faith, being a covenant of free grace, God alone can appoint what shall be necessarily believed by every one whom he will justify. What is the faith which he will accept and account for righteousness, depends wholly on his good pleasure. For it is of grace, and not of right, that this faith is accepted. And therefore he alone can set the measures of it: and what he has so appointed and declared, is alone necessary. Nobody can add to these fundamental articles of faith; nor make any other necessary, but what God himself hath made, and declared to be so. And what these are which God requires of those who will enter into, and receive the benefits of the new covenant, has already been shown. An explicit belief of these is absolutely required of all those to whom the Gospel of Jesus Christ is preached, and salvation through his Name proposed.

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The other parts of divine revelation are objects of faith, and are so to be received. They are truths, whereof no one can be rejected; none that is once known to be such, may, or ought to be disbelieved. For to acknowledge any proposition to be of divine revelation and authority; and yet to deny, or disbelieve it; is to offend against this fundamental article and ground of faith, that God is true. But yet a great many of the truths revealed in the Gospel, every one does, and must confess, a man may be ignorant of; nay, disbelieve, without danger to his salvation: as is evident in those, who, allowing the authority, differ in the interpretation and meaning of several texts of Scripture, not thought fundamental: in all which, it is plain, the contending parties on one side or the other, are ignorant of, nay, disbelieve the truths delivered in holy writ; unless contrarieties and contradictions can be contained in the same words; and divine revelation can mean contrary to itself.

Though all divine revelation requires the obedience of faith, yet every truth of inspired Scriptures is not one of those, that by the law of faith is required to be explicitly believed to justification. What those are, we have seen by what our Saviour and his apostles proposed to, and required in those whom they converted to the faith. Those are fundamentals, which it is not enough not to disbelieve: every one is required actually to assent to them. But any other proposition contained in the Scripture, which God has not thus made a necessary part of the law of faith, (without an actual assent to which, he will not allow any one to be a believer) a man may be ignorant of, without hazarding his salvation by a defect in his faith. He believes all that God has made necessary for him to believe, and assent to; and as for the rest of divine truths, there is nothing more required of him, but that he receive all the parts of divine revelation, with a docility and disposition prepared to embrace and assent to all truths coming from God; and submit his mind to whatsoever shall appear to him to bear that character. Where he, upon fair endeavours, understands it not, how can he avoid being ignorant? And where

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he cannot put several texts, and make them consist together, what remedy? He must either interpret one by the other, or suspend his opinion. He that thinks that more is, or can be required of poor frail man in matters of faith, will do well to consider what absurdities he will run into. God, out of the infiniteness of his mercy, has dealt with man, as a compassionate and tender Father. He gave him reason, and with it a law: that could not be otherwise than what reason should dictate; unless we should think, that a reasonable creature should have an unreasonable law. But, considering the frailty of man, apt to run into corruption and misery, he promised a Deliverer, whom in his good time he sent; and then declared to all mankind, that whoever would believe him to be the Saviour promised, and take him now raised from the dead, and constituted the Lord and Judge of all men, to be their King and Ruler, should be saved. This is a plain, intelligible proposition; and the all-merciful God seems herein to have consulted the poor of this world, and the bulk of mankind. These are articles that the labouring and illiterate man may comprehend. This is a religion suited to vulgar capacities; and the state of mankind in this world, destined to labour and travel. The writers and wranglers in religion fill it with niceties, and dress it up with notions, which they make necessary and fundamental parts of it; as if there were no way into the church, but through the academy or lyceum. The greatest part of mankind have not leisure for learning and logic, and superfine distinctions of the schools. Where the hand is used to the plough and the spade, the head is seldom elevated to sublime notions, or exercised in mysterious reasoning. It is well if men of that rank (to say nothing of the other sex) can comprehend plain propositions, and a short reasoning about things familiar to their minds, and nearly allied to their daily experience. Go beyond this, and you amaze the greatest part of mankind; and may as well talk Arabic to a poor day-labourer, as the notions and language that the books and disputes of religion are filled with; and as soon you will be understood. The dissenting congregation are supposed by

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their teachers to be more accurately instructed in matters of faith, and better to understand the Christian religion, than the vulgar conformists, who are charged with great ignorance; how truly, I will not here determine. But I ask them to tell me seriously, "Whether half their people have leisure to study? Nay, Whether one in ten, of those who come to their meetings in the country, if they had time to study them, do or can understand the controversies at this time so warmly managed amongst them, about 'justification,' the subject of this present treatise?" I have talked with some of their teachers, who confess themselves not to understand the difference in debate between them. And yet the points they stand on are reckoned of so great weight, so material, so fundamental in religion, that they divide communion, and separate upon them. Had God intended that none but the learned scribe, the disputer, or wise of this world, should be Christians, or be saved, thus religion should have been prepared for them, filled with speculations and niceties, obscure terms, and abstract notions. But men of that expectation, men furnished with such acquisitions, the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. i. are rather shut out from the simplicity of the Gospel; to make way for those poor, ignorant, illiterate, who heard and believed promises of a Deliverer, and believed Jesus to be him; who could conceive a man dead and made alive again; and believe that he should, at the end of the world, come again and pass sentence on all men, according to their deeds. That the poor had the Gospel preached to them; Christ makes a mark, as well as business of his mission, Matt. xi. 5. And if the poor had the Gospel preached to them, it was, without doubt, such a Gospel as the poor could understand; plain and intelligible: and so it was, as we have seen, in the preachings of Christ and his apostles.

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A VINDICATION

OF THE

REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,

&c.

FROM MR. EDWARDS'S REFLECTIONS.

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A VINDICATION

OF THE

REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,

&c.

My Book had not been long out, before it fell under the correction of the author of a Treatise, entitled, "Some Thoughts concerning the several Causes and Occasions of Atheism, especially in the present Age." No contemptible adversary, I will assure you; since, as it seems, he has got the faculty to heighten every thing that displeases him into the capital crime of atheism; and breathes against those, who come in his way, a pestilential air, whereby every the least distemper is turned into the plague, and becomes mortal. For whoever does not just say after Mr. Edwards, cannot, it is evident, escape being an atheist, or a promoter of atheism. I cannot but approve of any one's zeal, to guard and secure that great and fundamental article of all religion and morality, "That there is a God:" but atheism being a crime, which, for its madness as well as guilt, ought to shut a man out of all sober and civil society, should be very warily charged on any one, by deductions and consequences, which he himself does not own, or, at least, do not manifestly and unavoidably flow from what he asserts. This caution, charity, I think,

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obliges us to: and our author would possibly think himself hardly dealt with, if, for neglecting some of those rules he himself gives, p. 31 and 34, against atheism, he should be pronounced a promoter of it: as rational a charge I imagine, as some of those he makes; and as fitly put together, as the treatise of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. brought in among the causes of atheism. However I shall not much complain of him, since he joins me, p. 104, with no worse company than two eminently pious and learned * prelates of our church, whom he makes favourers of the same conceit, as he calls it. But what has that conceit to do with atheism? Very much. That conceit is of kin to Socinianism, and Socinianism to atheism. Let us hear Mr. Edwards himself. He says, p. 113, I am "all over Socinianized:" and therefore, my book, fit to be placed among the causes of atheism. For in the 64th, and following pages, he endeavours to show, That "a Socinian is an atheist;" or, lest that should seem harsh, "one that favours the cause of atheism," p. 75. For so he has been pleased to mollify, now it is published as a treatise, what was much more harsh, and much more confident in it, when it was preached as a sermon. In this abatement, he seems a little to comply with his own advice, against his fourth cause of atheism; which we have in these words, p. 34, "Wherefore, that we may effectually prevent this folly in ourselves, let us banish presumption, confidence, and self-conceit; let us extirpate all pride and arrogance; let us not list ourselves in the number of capricious opiniators."

I shall leave the Socinians themselves to answer his charge against them, and shall examine his proof of my being a Socinian. It stands thus, page 112, "When he" (the author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.) proceeds to mention the advantages and benefits of Christ's coming into the world, and appearing in the flesh, he hath not one syllable of his satisfying for us; or, by his death, purchasing life or salvation, or any

* Bp. Taylor, and the author of "the Naked Truth."

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thing that sounds like it. This, and several other things, show, that he is all over Socinianized." Which in effect is, that because I have not set down all that this author perhaps would have done, therefore I am a Socinian. But what if I should say, I set down as much as my argument required, and yet am no Socinian? Would he, from my silence and omission, give me the lie, and say, I am one? Surmises that may be overturned by a single denial are poor arguments, and such as some men would be ashamed of: at least, if they are to be permitted to men of this gentleman's skill and zeal, who knows how to make a good use of conjectures, suspicions, and uncharitable censures in the cause of God; yet even there too (if the cause of God can need such arts) they require a good memory to keep them from recoiling upon the author. He might have taken notice of these words in my book, (page 9, of this vol.) "From this estate of death, *Jesus Christ restores* all mankind to life." And a little lower, "The life which Jesus Christ restores to all men." And p. 109, "He that hath incurred death for his own transgression, cannot *lay down his life for another*, as our Saviour professes he did." This, methinks, *sounds something like* "Christ's purchasing life for us by his death." But this reverend gentleman has an answer ready; it was not in the place he would have had it in; it was not where I mention the advantages and benefits of Christ's coming. And therefore, I not having there one syllable of Christ's purchasing life and salvation for us by his death, or any thing that sounds like it: this, and several other things, that might be offered, show that I am "all over Socinianized." A very clear and ingenuous proof, and let him enjoy it.

But what will become of me, that I have not mentioned satisfaction!

Possibly, this reverend gentleman would have had charity enough for a known writer of the brotherhood, to have found it by an innuendo, in those words above quoted, of laying down his life for another. But every thing is to be strained here the other way. For

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the author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c., is of necessity to be represented as a Socinian; or else his book may be read, and the truths in it, which Mr. Edwards likes not, be received, and people put upon examining. Thus one, as full of happy conjectures and suspicions as this gentleman, might be apt to argue. But what if the author designed his treatise, as the title shows, chiefly for those who were not yet thoroughly, or firmly, Christians, proposing to work on those, who either wholly disbelieved, or doubted of the truth of the Christian religion? Would any one blame his prudence, if he mentioned only those advantages, which all Christians are agreed in? Might he not remember and observe that command of the apostle, Rom. xiv. 1, "Him that is weak in the faith, receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations;" without being a Socinian? Did he amiss, that he offered to the belief of those who stood off, that, and only that, which our Saviour and his apostles preached, for the reducing the unconverted world: and would any one think he in earnest went about to persuade men to be Christians, who should use that as an argument to recommend the Gospel, which he has observed men to lay hold on as an objection against it? To urge such points of controversy as necessary articles of faith, when we see our Saviour and the apostles, in their preaching, urged them not as necessary to be believed, to make men Christians, is (by our own authority) to add prejudices to prejudices, and to block up our own way to those men, whom we would have access to, and prevail upon. But some men had rather you should write booty, and cross your own design of removing men's prejudices to Christianity, than leave out one tittle of what they put into their systems. To such, I say, convince but men of the mission of Jesus Christ, make them but see the truth, simplicity, and reasonableness, of what he himself taught, and required to be believed by his followers; and you need not doubt but, being once fully persuaded of his doctrine, and the advantages which all Christians agree are received by him, such converts will not lay by the Scriptures, but by a

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constant reading and study of them get all the light they can from this divine revelation, and nourish themselves up in the words of faith, and of good doctrine, as St. Paul speaks to Timothy. But some men will not bear it, that any one should speak of religion, but according to the model that they themselves have made of it. Nay, though he proposes it upon the very terms, and in the very words which our Saviour and his apostles preached it in, yet he shall not escape censures and the severest insinuations. To deviate in the least, or to omit any thing contained in their articles, is heresy, under the most invidious names in fashion, and it is well if he escapes being a downright atheist. Whether this be the way for teachers to make themselves hearkened to, as men in earnest in religion, and really concerned for the salvation of men's souls, I leave them to consider. What success it has had, towards persuading men of the truth of Christianity, their own complaints of the prevalency of atheism, on the one hand, and the number of Deists on the other, sufficiently show.

Another thing laid to my charge, p. 105 and 107, is my "forgetting, or rather wilful omitting, some plain and obvious passages," and some "famous testimonies in the evangelists;" namely Matt. xxviii. 19, "Go, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And John i. 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And verse 14, "And the Word was made flesh." Mine, it seems, in this book, are all sins of omission. And yet, when it came out, the buzz, the flutter, and noise which was made, and the reports which were raised, would have persuaded the world, that it subverted all morality, and was designed against the Christian religion. I must confess, discourses of this kind, which I met with, spread up and down, at first amazed me; knowing the sincerity of those thoughts, which persuaded me to publish it (not without some hope of doing some service to decaying piety, and mistaken and slandered Christianity. I satisfied myself against those heats, with

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this assurance, that, if there was any thing in my book against what any one called religion, it was not against the religion contained in the Gospel. And for that, I appeal to all mankind.

But to return to Mr. Edwards, in particular, I must take leave to tell him, that if "omitting plain and obvious passages, the famous testimonies in the evangelists," be a fault in me, I wonder why he, among so many of this kind that I am guilty of, mentions so few. For I must acknowledge I have omitted more, nay, many more, that are "plain and obvious passages, and famous testimonies in the evangelists," than those he takes notice of. But if I have left out none of those "passages or testimonies," which contain what our Saviour and his apostles preached, and required assent to, to make men believers, I shall think my omissions (let them be what they will) no faults in the present case. Whatever doctrines Mr. Edwards would have to be believed, if they are such as our Saviour and his apostles required to be believed, to make a man a Christian, he will be sure to find them in those preachings and "famous testimonies," of our Saviour and his apostles, that I have quoted. And if they are not there, he may rest satisfied, that they were not proposed by our Saviour and his apostles, as necessary to be believed, to make men Christ's disciples.

If the omission of other texts in the evangelists (which are all true also, and no one of them to be disbelieved) be a fault, it might have been expected that Mr. Edwards should have accused me for leaving out Matt. i. 18—23, and Matt. xxvii. 24, 35, 50, 60, for these are "plain and obvious passages and famous testimonies in the evangelists;" and such, whereon these articles of the Apostles' Creed, viz. "born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried," are founded. These, being articles of the Apostles' Creed, are looked upon as "fundamental doctrines:" and one would wonder, why Mr. Edwards so quietly passes by their omission; did it not appear, that he was so intent on fixing his imputation of So-

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cinianism upon me, that, rather than miss that, he was content to drop the other articles of his creed. For I must observe to him, that if he had blamed me for the omission of the places last quoted out of St. Matthew (as he had as much reason as for any other) it would plainly have appeared, how idle and ill-grounded his charging Socinianism on me was. But, at any rate, he was to give the book an ill name; not because it was Socinian; for he has no more reason to charge it with Socinianism for the omissions he mentions, than the Apostles' Creed. It is therefore well for the compilers of that creed, that they lived not in Mr. Edwards's days: for he would, no doubt, have found them "all over Socinianized," for omitting the texts he quotes, and the doctrines he collects out of John i. and John xiv. p. 107, 108. Socinianism then is not the fault of the book, whatever else it be. For I repeat it again, there is not one word of Socinianism in it. I, that am not so good at conjectures as Mr. Edwards, shall leave it to him to say, or to those who can bear the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel, to guess, what its fault is.

Some men are shrewd guessers, and others would be thought to be so: but he must be carried far by his forward inclination who does not take notice, that the world is apt to think him a diviner, for any thing rather than for the sake of truth, who sets up his own suspicions against the direct evidence of things; and pretends to know other men's thoughts and reasons better than they themselves. I had said, that the epistles, being writ to those who were already believers, could not be supposed to be writ to them to teach them fundamentals, without which they could not be believers.

And the reason I gave, why I had not gone through the writings in the epistles, to collect the fundamental articles of faith, as I had through the preachings of our Saviour and the apostles, was, because those fundamental articles were in those epistles promiscuously, and without distinction, mixed with other truths. And, therefore, we shall find and discern those great and ne-

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cessary points best in the preachings of our Saviour and the apostles, to those who were yet ignorant of the faith, and unconverted. This, as far as I know my own thoughts, was the reason why I did (as Mr. Edwards complains, p. 109) "not proceed to the epistles, and not give an account of them, as I had done of the Gospels and Acts." This, I imagined, I had in the close of my book so fully and clearly expressed (particularly p. 152, of this vol.) that I supposed nobody, how willing soever, could have mistaken me. But this gentleman is so much better acquainted with me than I am with myself; sees so deeply into my heart, and knows so perfectly every thing that passes there; that he, with assurance, tells the world, p. 109, "That I purposely omitted the epistolary writings of the apostles, because they are fraught with other fundamental doctrines, besides that one which I mention." And then he goes to enumerate those fundamental articles, p. 110, 111, viz. "The corruption and degeneracy of human nature, with the true original of it (the defection of our first parents) the propagation of sin and mortality, (our restoration and reconciliation by Christ's blood, the eminency and excellency of his priesthood, the efficacy of his death, the full satisfaction made, thereby, to divine justice, and his being made an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin. Christ's righteousness, our justification by it, election, adoption, sanctification, saving faith, the nature of the Gospel, the new covenant, the riches of God's mercy in the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, the certainty of the resurrection of human bodies, and of the future glory."

Give me leave now to ask you seriously, whether these, which you have here set down under the title of "fundamental doctrines," are such (when reduced to propositions) that every one of them is required to be believed to make a man a Christian, and such as, without the actual belief thereof, he cannot be saved. If they are not so, every one of them, you may call them "fundamental doctrines" as much as you please, they are not of those doctrines of faith I was speaking of, which

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are only such as are required to be actually believed to make a man a Christian. If you say, some of them are such necessary points of faith, and others not, you, by this specious list of well-sounding, but unexplained terms, arbitrarily collected, only make good what I have said, viz. that the necessary articles of faith are, in the epistles, promiscuously delivered with other truths, and, therefore, they cannot be distinguished but by some other mark, than being barely found in the epistles. If you say, that they are all of them necessary articles of faith, I shall then desire you to reduce them to so many plain doctrines, and then prove them to be every one of them required to be believed by every Christian man, to make him a member of the Christian church. For, to begin with the first, it is not enough to tell us, as you do, that "the corruption and degeneracy of human nature, with the true original of it (the defection of our first parents) the propagation of sin and mortality, is one of the great heads of Christian divinity." But you are to tell us, what are the propositions we are required to believe concerning this matter: for nothing can be an article of faith, but some proposition; and then it will remain to be proved, that these articles are necessary to be believed to salvation. The Apostles' Creed was taken, in the first ages of the church, to contain all things necessary to salvation; I mean, necessary to be believed: but you have now better thought on it, and are pleased to enlarge it, and we, no doubt, are bound to submit to your orthodoxy.

The list of materials for his creed (for the articles are not yet formed) Mr. Edwards closes, p. 111, with these words: "These are the matters of faith contained in the epistles, and they are essential and integral parts of the Gospel itself." What, just these? Neither more nor less? If you are sure of it, pray let us have them speedily, for the reconciling of differences in the Christian church, which has been so cruelly torn about the articles of the Christian faith, to the great reproach of Christian charity, and scandal of our true religion.

Mr. Edwards, having thus, with two learned terms of "essential and integral parts," sufficiently proved the

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matter in question, viz. That all those he has set down are articles of faith necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, he grows warm at my omission of them. This I cannot complain of as unnatural: the spirit of creed-making always rising from a heat of zeal for our own opinions, and warm endeavours, by all ways possible, to decry and bear down those who differ in a tittle from us. What then could I expect more gentle and candid, than what Mr. Edwards has subjoined in these words? "And therefore it is no wonder that our author, being sensible of this," (viz. That the points he has named were essential and integral parts of the Gospel) "would not vouchsafe to give us an abstract of those inspired writings [the epistles]; but passes them by with some contempt." Sir, when your angry fit is over, and the abatement of your passion has given way to the return of your sincerity, I shall beg you to read this passage in page 154, of this vol. "These holy writers (viz. the penmen of the Scriptures) *inspired* from above, writ nothing but truth, and, in most places, very weighty truths to us now, for the expounding, clearing, and confirming of the Christian doctrine; and establishing those in it who had embraced it." And again, p. 156, "The other parts of *divine revelation* are objects of faith, and are so to be received. They are truths, of which none that is once known to be such, *i. e.* revealed, may or ought to be disbelieved." And if this does not satisfy you, that I have as high a veneration for the epistles as you or any one can have, I require you to publish to the world those passages, which show my contempt of them. In the mean time, I shall desire my reader to examine what I have writ concerning the epistles, which is all contained between pp. 151 and 158 of this vol. and then to judge, whether I have made bold with the epistles in what I have said of them, or this gentleman made bold with truth in what he has writ of me. Human frailty will not, I see, easily quit its hold; what it loses in one part, it will be ready to regain in another; and not be hindered from taking reprisals, even on the most privileged sort of men. Mr. Edwards, who is intrenched

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in orthodoxy, and so is as safe in matters of faith almost as infallibility itself, is yet as apt to err as others in matters of fact.

But he has not yet done with me about the epistles: all his fine draught of my slighting that part of the Scripture will be lost, unless the strokes complete it into Socinianism. In his following words you have the conclusion of the whole matter. His words are these: "And more especially, if I may conjecture," (by all means, sir; conjecturing is your proper talent: you have hitherto done nothing else; and I will say that for you, you have a lucky hand at it)—"he doth this (*i. e.* pass by the epistles with contempt) because he knew that there are so many and frequent, and those so illustrious and eminent attestations to the doctrine of the ever to be adored Trinity, in these epistles." Truly, sir, if you will permit me to know what I know, as well as you do allow yourself to conjecture what you please, you are out for this once; the reason why I went not through the epistles, as I did the Gospels and the Acts, was that very reason I printed, and that will be found so sufficient a one to all considerate readers, that I believe they will think you need not strain your conjectures for another. And, if you think it to be so easy to distinguish fundamentals from non-fundamentals in the epistles, I desire you to try your skill again, in giving the world a perfect collection of propositions out of the epistles, that contain all that is required, and no more than what is absolutely required to be believed by all Christians, without which faith they cannot be of Christ's church. For I tell you, notwithstanding the show you have made, you have not yet done it, nor will you affirm that you have.

His next page, p. 112, is made up of the same, which he calls, not uncharitable conjectures. I expound, he says, "John xiv. 9, &c. after the anti-Trinitarian mode:" and I make "Christ and Adam to be Sons of God, in the same sense, and by their birth, as the Racovians generally do." I know not but it may be true, that the anti-Trinitarians and Racovians understand those places as I do: but it is more than I know, that they

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do so. I took not my sense of those texts from those writers, but from the Scripture itself, giving light to its own meaning, by one place compared with another: what in this way appears to me its true meaning, I shall not decline, because I am told that it is so understood by the Racovians, whom I never yet read; nor embrace the contrary, though the "generality of divines" I more converse with should declare for it. If the sense, wherein I understand those texts, be a mistake, I shall be beholden to you, if you will set me right. But they are not popular authorities, or frightful names, whereby I judge of truth or falsehood. You will now, no doubt, applaud your conjectures; the point is gained, and I am openly a Socinian, since I will not disown, that I think the Son of God was a phrase, that among the Jews, in our Saviour's time, was used for the Messiah, though the Socinians understand it in the same sense; and therefore I must certainly be of their persuasion in every thing else. I admire the acuteness, force, and fairness of your reasoning, and so I leave you to triumph in your conjectures. Only I must desire you to take notice, that that ornament of our church, and every way eminent prelate, the late archbishop of Canterbury, understood that phrase in the same sense that I do, without being a Socinian. You may read what he says concerning Nathanael, in his first "Sermon of Sincerity," published this year: his words are these, p. 4, "And being satisfied that he [our Saviour] was the Messiah, he presently owned him for such, calling him the Son of God, and the king of Israel."

Though this gentleman knows my thoughts as perfectly as if he had for several years past lain in my bosom, yet he is mightily at a loss about my person: as if it at all concerned the truth contained in my book, what hand it came from. However, the gentleman is mightily perplexed about the author. Why, sir, what if it were writ by a scribbler of Bartholomew-fair drolls, with all that flourish of declamatory rhetoric, and all that smartness of wit and jest about captain Tom, Unitarians, units, and cyphers, &c. which are to be found between pages 115, and 123 of a book, that came out

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during the merry time of rope-dancing, and puppet plays? What is truth, would, I hope, nevertheless be truth in it, however oddly spruced up by such an author: though, perhaps, it is likely some would be apt to say, such merriment became not the gravity of my subject, and that I writ not in the style of a graduate in divinity. I confess, (as Mr. Edwards rightly says) my fault lies on the other side, in a want of "vivacity and elevation:" and I cannot wonder, that one of his character and palate should find out and complain of my flatness, which has so overcharged my book with plain and direct texts of Scripture, in a matter capable of no other proofs. But yet I must acknowledge his excess of civility to me; he shows me more kindness than I could expect or wish, since he prefers what I say to him myself to what is offered to him from the word of God; and makes me this compliment, that I begin to mend, about the close, *i. e.* when I leave off quoting of Scripture: and the dull work was done, of "going through the history of the Evangelists and Acts," which he computes, p. 105, to take up three quarters of my book. Does not all this deserve, at least, that I should, in return, take some care of his credit? Which I know not how better to do, than by entreating him, that when he takes next in hand such a subject as this, wherein the salvation of souls is concerned, he would treat it a little more seriously, and with a little more candour; lest men should find in his writings another cause of atheism, which, in this treatise, he has not thought fit to mention. "Ostentation of wit" in general he has made a "cause of atheism," p. 28. But the world will tell him, that frothy light discourses concerning the serious matters of religion; and ostentation of trifling and misbecoming wit in those who come as ambassadors from God, under the title of successors of the apostles, in the great commission of the Gospel; are none of the least causes of atheism.

Some men have so peculiar a way of arguing, that one may see it influences them in the repeating another man's reasoning, and seldom fails to make it their own. In the next paragraph I find these words: "what makes

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him contend for one single article, with the exclusion of all the rest? He pretends it is this, that all men ought to understand their religion." This, I confess, is a reasoning I did not think of; nor could it hardly, I fear, have been used but by one who had first took up his opinion from the recommendation of fashion or interest, and then sought topics to make it good. Perhaps the deference due to your character excused you from the trouble of quoting the page, where I pretend, as you say; and it is so little like my way of reasoning, that I shall not look for it in a book where I remember nothing of it, and where, without your direction, I fear the reader will scarce find it. Though I have not "that vivacity of thought, that elevation of mind," which Mr. Edwards demands, yet common sense would have kept me from contending that there is but one article, because all men ought to understand their religion. Numbers of propositions may be harder to be remembered, but it is the abstruseness of the notions, or obscurity, inconsistency, or doubtfulness of the terms or expressions, that makes them hard to be understood: and one single proposition may more perplex the understanding than twenty others. But where did you find "I contended for one single article, so as to exclude all the rest?" You might have remembered, that I say, p. 16, 17; That the article of the one only true God was also necessary to be believed. This might have satisfied you, that I did not so contend for one article of faith, as to be at defiance with more than one. However, you insist on the word one with great vigour, from p. 108 to 121. And you did well; you had else lost all the force of that killing stroke reserved for the close, in that sharp jest of Unitarians, and a clench or two more of great moment.

Having found, by a careful perusal of the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles, that the religion they proposed consisted in that short, plain, easy, and intelligible summary which I set down, p. 157, in these words: "Believing Jesus to be the Saviour promised, and taking him, now raised from the dead, and constituted the Lord and Judge of men, to be their King and

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Ruler," I could not forbear magnifying the wisdom and goodness of God (which infinitely exceeds the thoughts of ignorant, vain, and narrow-minded man) in these following words: "The all merciful God seems herein to have consulted the poor of this world, and the bulk of mankind; *these are articles* that the labouring and illiterate man may comprehend." Having thus plainly mentioned more than one article, I might have taken it amiss, that Mr. Edwards should be at so much pains as he is, to blame me for "contending for one" article; because I thought more than one could not be understood; had he not had many fine things to say in this declamation upon one article, which affords him so much matter, that less than seven pages could not hold it. Only here and there, as men of oratory often do, he mistakes the business, as p. 115, where he says, "I urge, that there must be nothing in Christianity that is not plain, and exactly levelled to all men's mother-wit." I desire to know where I said so, or that "the very manner of every thing in Christianity must be clear and intelligible, every thing must be presently comprehended by the weakest noddle, or else it is no part of religion, especially of Christianity;" as he has it p. 119. I am sure it is not in p. 133—136, 149—151, of my book: these, therefore, to convince him that I am of another opinion, I shall desire somebody to read to Mr. Edwards, for he himself reads my book with such spectacles, as make him find meanings and words in it, neither of which I put there. He should have remembered, that I speak not of all the doctrines of Christianity, nor all that is published to the world in it: but of those truths only, which are absolutely required to be believed to make any one a Christian. And these, I find, are so plain and easy, that I see no reason why every body, with me, should not magnify the goodness and condescension of the Almighty, who having, out of his free grace, proposed a new law of faith to sinful and lost man; hath, by that law, required no harder terms, nothing as absolutely necessary to be believed, but what is suited to vulgar capacities, and the comprehension of illiterate men.

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You are a little out again, p. 118, where you ironically say, as if it were my sense, "Let us have but one article, though it be with defiance to all the rest." Jesting apart, sir, this is a serious turn, that what our Saviour and his apostles preached, and admitted men into the church for believing, is all that is absolutely required to make a man a Christian. But this is, without any "defiance to all the rest," taught in the word of God. This excludes not the belief of any of those many other truths contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, which it is the duty of every Christian to study, and thereby build himself up in our most holy faith; receiving with stedfast belief, and ready obedience, all those things which the Spirit of truth hath therein revealed. But that all the rest of the inspired writings, or, if you please, "articles, are of equal necessity" to be believed to make a man a Christian, with what was preached by our Saviour and his apostles, that I deny. A man, as I have shown, may be a Christian and believer, without actually believing them, because those whom our Saviour and his apostles, by their preaching and discourses, converted to the faith, were made Christians and believers, barely upon the receiving what they preached to them.

I hope it is no derogation to the Christian religion to say, that the fundamentals or it, *i. e.* all that is necessary to be believed in it, by all men, is easy to be understood by all men. This I thought myself authorized to say, by the very easy and very intelligible articles, insisted on by our Saviour and his apostles; which contain nothing but what could be understood by the bulk of mankind; a term which, I now not why, Mr. Edwards, p. 117, is offended at; and thereupon is, after his fashion, sharp upon me about captain Tom and his myrmidons, for whom, he tells me, I am "going to make a religion." The making of religions and creeds I leave to others. I only set down the Christian religion as I find our Saviour and his apostles preached it, and preached it to, and left it for, the "ignorant and unlearned multitude." For I hope you do not think, how contemptibly soever you speak of the "venerable

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mob," as you are pleased to dignify them, p. 117, that the bulk of mankind, or, in your phrase, the "rabble," are not concerned in religion, or ought to understand it, in order to their salvation. Nor are you, I hope, acquainted with any who are of that Muscovite divine's mind, who, to one that was talking to him about religion, and the other world, replied, That for the czar, indeed, and bojars, they might be permitted to raise their hopes to heaven; but that for such poor wretches as he, they were not to think of salvation.

I remember the Pharisees treated the common people with contempt, and said, "Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed in him? But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed." But yet these, who, in the censure of the Pharisees, were cursed, were some of the poor; or, if you please to have it so, the mob, to whom the "Gospel was preached" by our Saviour, as he tells John's disciples, Matt. xi. 5.

Pardon me, sir, that I have here laid these examples and considerations before you; a little to prevail with you not to let loose such a torrent of wit and eloquence against the "bulk of mankind" another time, and that for a mere fancy of your own: for I do not see how they here came in your way; but that you were resolved to set up something to have a fling at, and show your parts, in what you call your "different strain," though besides the purpose. I know nobody was going to "ask the mob, What you must believe?" And as for me, I suppose you will take my word for it, that I think no mob, no, not your "venerable mob," is to be asked, what I am to believe; nor that "Articles of faith" are to be "received by the vote of club-men," or any other sort of men you will name instead of them.

In the following words, p. 115, you ask, "Whether a man may not understand those articles of faith, which you mentioned out of the Gospels and epistles, if they be explained to him, as well as that one I speak of?" It is as the articles are, and as they are explained. There are articles that have been some hundreds of years explaining; which there are many, and those not of the most illiterate, who profess they do

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not yet understand. And to instance in no other, but "He descended into hell," the learned are not yet agreed in the sense of it, though great pains have been taken to explain it.

Next, I ask, Who are to explain your articles? The papists will explain some of them one way, and the reformed another. The remonstrants, and anti-remonstrants give them different senses. And probably, the Trinitarians and Unitarians will profess, that they understand not each others' explications. And at last, I think it may be doubted, whether any articles, which need men's explications, can be so clearly and certainly understood, as one which is made so very plain by the Scripture itself, as not to need any explication at all. Such is this, that Jesus is the Messiah. For though you learnedly tell us, that Messiah is a Hebrew word, and no better understood by the vulgar than Arabic; yet I guess it is so fully explained in the New Testament, and in those places I have quoted out of it, that nobody, who can understand any ordinary sentence in the Scripture, can be at a loss about it. And it is plain, it needs no other explication than what our Saviour and the apostles gave it in their preaching; for, as they preached it, men received it, and that sufficed to make them believers.

To conclude, when I heard that this learned gentleman, who had a name for his study of the Scriptures, and writings on them, had done me the honour to consider my treatise, I promised myself, that his degree, calling, and fame in the world, would have secured to me something of weight in his remarks, which might have convinced me of my mistakes; and, if he had found any in it, justified my quitting of them. But having examined what, in his, concerns my book, I to my wonder find, that he has only taken pains to give it an ill name, without so much as attempting to refute any one position in it, how much soever he is pleased to make a noise against several propositions, which he might be free with, because they are his own: and I have no reason to take it amiss if he has shown his zeal and skill against them. He has been so favourable to what is

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mine, as not to use any one argument against any passage in my book. This, which I take for a public testimony of his approbation, I shall return him my thanks for, when I know whether I owe it to his mistake, conviction, or kindness. But if he writ only for his bookseller's sake, he alone ought to thank him.

After the foregoing papers were sent to the press, the Witnesses to Christianity, of the reverend and learned Dr. Patrick, now lord bishop of Ely, fell into my hands. I regretted the not having seen it before I writ my treatise of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. I should then, possibly, by the light given me by so good a guide, and so great a man, with more confidence directly have fallen into the knowledge of Christianity; which, in the way I sought it, in its source, required the comparing of texts with texts, and the more than once reading over the Evangelists and Acts, besides other parts of Scripture. But I had the ill-luck not to see that treatise until so few hours since, that I have had time only to read as far as the end of the introduction, or first chapter: and there Mr. Edwards may find, that this pious bishop (whose writings show he studies, as well as his life that he believes, the Scriptures) owns what Mr. Edwards is pleased to call "a plausible conceit," which, he says, "I give over and over again in these formal words, viz. That nothing is required to be believed by any Christian man, but this, That Jesus is the Messiah."

The liberty Mr. Edwards takes, in other places, deserves not it should be taken upon his word, "That these formal words" are to be found "over and over again" in my book, unless he had quoted the pages. But I will set him down the "formal words," which are to be found in this reverend prelate's book, p. 14. "To be the Son of God, and to be Christ, being but different expressions of the same thing." And, p. 10, "It is the very same thing to believe, that Jesus is the Christ, and to believe, that Jesus is the Son of God; express it how you please. This *alone* is the faith which can regenerate a man, and put a divine spirit

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into him; that is, make him a conqueror over the world, as Jesus was." I have quoted only these few words; but Mr. Edwards, if he pleases, or any body else, may, in this first chapter, satisfy himself more fully, that the design of it is to show, that in our Saviour's time "Son of God" was a known and received name and appellation of the Messiah, and so used in the holy writers. And that the faith that was to make men Christians was only the believing "that Jesus is the Messiah." It is to the truth of this proposition that he "examines his witnesses," as he speaks, p. 21. And this, if I mistake not, in his epistle dedicatory, he calls "Christianity;" fol. A 3, where he calls them "witnesses to Christianity." But these two propositions, viz. That "SON OF GOD," in the Gospel, stands for Messiah; and that the faith, which alone makes men Christians, is the believing "Jesus to be the Messiah," displeases Mr. Edwards so much in my book, that he thinks himself authorized from them, to charge me with Socinianism, and want of sincerity. How he will be pleased to treat this reverend prelate, whilst he is alive, (for the dead may, with good manners, be made bold with) must be left to his decisive authority. This, I am sure, which way soever he determine, he must, for the future, either afford me more good company, or fairer quarter.

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A

SECOND VINDICATION

OF THE

REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,

&c.

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PREFACE

TO THE

READER.

It hath pleased Mr. Edwards, in answer to the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. and its Vindication, to turn one of the most weighty and important points that can come into question, (even no less than the very fundamentals of the Christian religion) into a mere quarrel against the author; as every one, with Mr. Bold, may observe. In my reply to him, I have endeavoured, as much as his objections would allow me, to bring him to the subject-matter of my book, and the merits of the cause; though his peculiar way of writing controversy has made it necessary for me, in following him step by step, to wipe off the dirt he has thrown on me, and clear myself from those falsehoods he has filled his book with. This I could not but do, in dealing with such an antagonist; that, by the untruths I have proved upon him, the reader may judge of those other allegations of his, whereof the proof lying on his side, the bare denial is enough on mine, and, indeed, are wholly nothing to the truth or falsehood of what is contained in my Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. To which I shall desire the reader to add this farther consideration from his way of writing, not against my book, but against me, for writing it, that if he had had a real concern for truth and religion in this dispute, he would have treated it after another manner; and we

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should have had from him more argument, reasoning, and clearness, and less boasting, declamation, and railing. It has been unavoidable for me to take notice of a great deal of this sort of stuff, in answering a writer who has very little else to say in the controversy, and places his strength in things beside the question: but yet I have been so careful to take all occasions to explain the doctrine of my book, that I hope the reader will not think his pains wholly lost labour, in perusing this reply; wherein he will find some farther, and, I hope, satisfying account, concerning the writings of the New Testament, and the Christian Religion contained in it.

Mr. Edwards's ill language, which I thought personally to me, (though I know not how I had provoked a man whom I had never had to do with) I am now satisfied, by his rude and scurrilous treating of Mr. Bold, is his way and strength in management of controversy; and therefore requires a little more consideration in this disputant, than otherwise it would deserve. Mr. Bold, with the calmness of a Christian, the gravity of a divine, the clearness of a man of parts, and the civility of a well-bred man, made some "animadversions" on his Socinianism unmasked; which, with a sermon preached on the same subject with my Reasonableness of Christianity, he published: and how he has been used by Mr. Edwards let the world judge.

I was extremely surprised with Mr. Bold's book, at a time when there was so great an outcry against mine, on all hands. But, it seems, he is a man that does not take up things upon hearsay; nor is afraid to own truth, whatever clamour or calumny it may lie under. Mr. Edwards confidently tells the world, that Mr. Bold has been drawn in to espouse this cause upon base and mean considerations. Whose picture of the two such a description is most likely to give us, I shall leave to the reader to judge, from what he will find in their writings on this subject. For as to the persons themselves, I am equally a stranger to them both: I know not the face of either of them: and having hitherto never had any communication with Mr. Bold, I shall begin with him,

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as I did with Mr. Edwards, in print; and here publicly return him this following acknowledgment, for what he has printed in this controversy.

To Mr. Bold.

Sir,

Though I do not think I ought to return thanks to any one for being of my opinion, any more than to fall out with him for differing from me; yet I cannot but own to all the world the esteem that I think is due to you, for that proof you have given of a mind and temper becoming a true minister of the Gospel, in appearing, as you have done, in the defence of a point, a great point of Christianity, which it is evident you could have no other temptation to declare for, but the love of truth. It has fared with you herein no better than with me. For Mr. Edwards not being able to answer your arguments, he has found out already that you are a mercenary, defending a cause against your persuasion, for hire; and that you "are sailing to Racovia by a side-wind:" such inconsistencies can one (whose business it is to rail for a cause he cannot defend) put together to make a noise with: and he tells you plainly what you must expect if you write any more on this argument, viz. to be pronounced a downright apostate and renegado.

As soon as I saw your sermon and animadversions, I wondered what scarecrow Mr. Edwards would set up, wherewith he might hope to deter men of more caution than sense from reading of them; since Socinianism, from which you were known to be as remote as he, I concluded would not do. The unknown author of the Reasonableness of Christianity he might make a Socinian, Mahometan, atheist, or what sort of raw-head and bloody-bones he pleased. But I imagined he had more sense than to venture any such aspersions on a man whom, though I have not yet the happiness personally to know, yet I know hath justly a great and settled reputation amongst worthy men; and I thought

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that that coat, which you had worn with so much reputation, might have preserved you from the bespatterings of Mr. Edwards's dunghill. But what is to be expected from a warrior that hath no other ammunition, and yet ascribes to himself victory from hence, and, with this artillery, imagines he carries all before him? And so Skimmington rides in triumph, driving all before him, by the ordures that he bestows on those that come in his way. And, were not Christianity concerned in the case, a man would scarce excuse to himself the ridiculousness of entering into the list with such a combatant. I do not, therefore, wonder that this mighty boaster, having no other way to answer the books of his opponents, but by popular calumnies, is fain to have recourse to his only refuge, and lay out his natural talent in vilifying and slandering the authors. But I see, by what you have already writ, how much you are above that; and, as you take not up your opinions from fashion or interest, so you quit them not, to avoid the malicious reports of those that do: out of which number they can hardly be left, who (unprovoked) mix, with the management of their cause, injuries and ill-language to those they differ from. This, at least, I am sure, zeal or love for truth can never permit falsehood to be used in the defence of it.

Your mind, I see, prepared for truth, by resignation of itself, not to the traditions of men, but the doctrine of the Gospel, has made you more readily entertain, and more easily enter into the meaning of my book, than most I have heard speak of it. And since you seem to me to comprehend what I have laid together, with the same disposition of mind, and in the same sense that I received it from the Holy Scriptures, I shall, as a mark of my respect to you, give you a particular account of it.

The beginning of the year in which it was published, the controversy that made so much noise and heat amongst some of the dissenters, coming one day accidentally into my mind, drew me, by degrees, into a stricter and more thorough inquiry into the question about justification. The Scripture was direct and plain, that it

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was faith that justified: The next question then was, What faith that was that justified; what it was which, if a man believed, it should be imputed to him for righteousness. To find out this, I thought the right way was, to search the Scriptures; and thereupon betook myself seriously to the reading of the New Testament, only to that purpose. What that produced, you and the world have seen.

The first view I had of it seemed mightily to satisfy my mind, in the reasonableness and plainness of this doctrine; but yet the general silence I had in my little reading met with, concerning any such thing, awed me with the apprehension of singularity; until going on in the Gospel-history, the whole tenor of it made it so clear and visible, that I more wondered that every body did not see and embrace it, than that I should assent to what was so plainly laid down, and so frequently inculcated in holy writ, though systems of divinity said nothing of it. That which added to my satisfaction was, that it led me into a discovery of the marvellous and divine wisdom of our Saviour's conduct, in all the circumstances of his promulgating this doctrine; as well as of the necessity that such a lawgiver should be sent from God, for the reforming the morality of the world; two points, that, I must confess, I had not found so fully and advantageously explained in the books of divinity I had met with, as the history of the Gospel seemed to me, upon an attentive perusal, to give occasion and matter for. But the necessity and wisdom of our Saviour's opening the doctrine (which he came to publish) as he did in parables and figurative ways of speaking, carries such a thread of evidence through the whole history of the evangelists, as, I think, is impossible to be resisted; and makes it a demonstration, that the sacred historians did not write by concert, as advocates for a bad cause, or to give colour and credit to an imposture they would usher into the world: since they, every one of them, in some place or other, omit some passages of our Saviour's life, or circumstances of his actions, which show the wisdom and wariness of his conduct; and which, even those of the evangelists who have recorded, do barely

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and transiently mention, without laying any stress on them, or making the least remark of what consequence they are, to give us our Saviour's true character, and to prove the truth of their history. These are evidences of truth and sincerity, which result alone from the nature of things, and cannot be produced by any art or contrivance.

How much I was pleased with the growing discovery, every day, whilst I was employed in this search, I need not say. The wonderful harmony, that the farther I went disclosed itself, tending to the same points, in all the parts of the sacred history of the Gospel, was of no small weight with me and another person, who every day, from the beginning to the end of my search, saw the progress of it, and knew, at my first setting out, that I was ignorant whither it would lead me; and therefore every day asked me, What more the Scripture had taught me? So far was I from the thoughts of Socinianism, or an intention to write for that, or any other party, or to publish any thing at all. But, when I had gone through the whole, and saw what a plain, simple, reasonable thing Christianity was, suited to all conditions and capacities; and in the morality of it now, with divine authority, established into a legible law, so far surpassing all that philosophy and human reason had attained to, or could possibly make effectual to all degrees of mankind, I was flattered to think it might be of some use in the world; especially to those, who thought either that there was no need of revelation at all, or that the revelation of our Saviour required the belief of such articles for salvation, which the settled notions, and their way of reasoning in some, and want of understanding in others, made impossible to them. Upon these two topics the objections seemed to turn, which were with most assurance made by Deists against Christianity; but against Christianity misunderstood. It seemed to me, that there needed no more to show them the weakness of their exceptions, but to lay plainly before them the doctrine of our Saviour and his apostles, as delivered in the Scriptures, and not as taught by the several sects of Christians.

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This tempted me to publish it, not thinking it deserved an opposition from any minister of the Gospel, and least of all, from any one in the communion of the church of England. But so it is, that Mr. Edwards's zeal for he knows not what (for he does not yet know his own creed, nor what is required to make him a Christian) could not brook so plain, simple, and intelligible a religion: but yet, not knowing what to say against it, and the evidence it has from the word of God, he thought fit to let the book alone, and fall upon the author. What great matter he has done in it, I need not tell you, who have seen and showed the weakness of his wranglings. You have here, sir, the true history of the birth of my Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scriptures, and my design in publishing it, &c. What it contains, and how much it tends to peace and union among Christians, if they would receive Christianity as it is, you have discovered. I am,

SIR,

Your most humble servant,

A. B.

My readers will pardon me, that, in my preface to them, I make this particular address to Mr. Bold. He hath thought it worth his while to defend my book. How well he has done it, I am too much a party to say. I think it so sufficient to Mr. Edwards, that I needed not to have troubled myself any farther about him, on the account of any argument that remained in his book to be answered. But a great part of the world judging of the contests about truth, as they do of popular elections, that the side carries it where the greatest noise is; it was necessary they should be undeceived, and be let see, that sometimes such writers may be let alone, not because they cannot, but because they deserve not to be answered.

This farther I ought to acknowledge to Mr. Bold, and own to the world, that he hath entered into the true sense of my treatise, and his notions do so perfectly agree

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with mine, that I shall not be afraid, by thoughts and expressions very like his, in this my second vindication, to give Mr. Edwards (who is exceedingly quick-sighted and positive in such matters) a handle to tell the world, that either I borrowed this my Vindication from Mr. Bold, or writ his Animadversions for him. The former of these I shall count no discredit, if Mr. Edwards think fit to charge me with it; and the latter, Mr. Bold's character is answer enough to. Though the impartial reader, I doubt not, will find, that the same uniform truth, considered by us, suggested the same thoughts to us both, without any other communication.

There is another author, who in a civiler style hath made it necessary for me to vindicate my book from a reflection or two of his, wherein he seems to come short of that candour he professes. All that I shall say on this occasion here is, that it is a wonder to me, that having published what I thought the Scripture told me was the faith that made a Christian, and desired, that if I was mistaken, any one that thought so would have the goodness to inform me better; so many with their tongues, and some in print, should intemperately find fault with a poor man out of his way, who desires to be set right; and no one, who blames his faith, as coming short, will tell him what that faith is, which is required to make him a Christian. But I hope, that amongst so many censurers, I shall at least find one, who knowing himself to be a Christian upon other grounds than I am, will have so much Christian charity, as to show me what more is absolutely necessary to be believed, by me, and every man, to make him a Christian.

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A

SECOND VINDICATION

OF THE

REASONABLENESS OF CHRISTIANITY,

&c.

A CAUSE that stands in need of falsehoods to support it, and an adversary that will make use of them, deserve nothing but contempt; which I doubt not but every considerate reader thought answer enough to Mr. Edwards's Socinianism unmasked. But since in his late Socinian Creed he says, "I would have answered him if I could," that the interest of Christianity may not suffer by my silence, nor the contemptibleness of his treatise afford him matter of triumph among those who lay any weight on such boasting, it is fit it should be shown what an arguer he is, and how well he deserves, for his performance, to be dubbed, by himself, "irrefragable."

Those who, like Mr. Edwards, dare to publish inventions of their own for matters of fact, deserve a name so abhorred, that it finds not room in civil conversation. This secures him from the proper answer, due to his imputations to me, in print, of matters of fact utterly false, which, without any reply of mine, fix upon him that name (which, without a profligate mind,

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a man cannot expose himself to) till he hath proved them. Till then, he must wear what he has put upon himself. This being a rule, which common justice hath prescribed to the private judgments of mankind, as well as to the public judicatures of courts, that all allegations of facts, brought by contending parties, should be presumed to be false till they are proved.

There are two ways of making a book unanswerable. The one is by the clearness, strength, and fairness of the argumentation. Men who know how to write thus, are above bragging what they have done, or boasting to the world that their adversaries are baffled. Another way to make a book unanswerable, is to lay a stress on matters of fact foreign to the question, as well as to truth; and to stuff it with scurrility and fiction. This hath been always so evident to common sense, that no man, who had any regard to truth or ingenuity, ever thought matters of fact besides the argument, and stories made at pleasure the way of managing controversies. Which showing only the want of sense and argument, could, if used on both sides, end in nothing but downright railing: and he must always have the better of the cause who has lying and impudence on his side.

The unmasker, in the entrance of his book, sets a great distance between his and my way of writing. I am not sorry that mine differs so much as it does from his. If it were like his, I should think, like his, it wanted the author's commendations. For, in his first paragraph, which is all laid out in his own testimony of his own book, he so earnestly bespeaks an opinion of mastery in politeness, order, coherence, pertinence, strength, seriousness, temper, and all the good qualities requisite in controversy, that I think, since he pleases himself so much with his own good opinion, one in pity ought not to go about to rob him of so considerable an admirer. I shall not, therefore, contest any of those excellencies he ascribes to himself, or faults he blames in me, in the management of the dispute between us, any farther than as particular passages of his book, as I come to examine them, shall suggest unavoidable re-

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marks to me. I think the world does not so much concern itself about him or me, that it need be told in that inventory, he has given of his own good parts, in his first paragraph, which of us two has the better hand at "flourishes, jesting, and common-places;" if I am, as he says, p. 2, troubled with "angry fits, and passionate ferments, which, though I strive to palliate, are easily discernible," &c. and he be more laudably ingenuous in the openness of that temper, which he shows in every leaf; I shall leave to him the entire glory of boasting of it. Whatever we brag of our performances, they will be just as they are, however he may think to add to his by his own encomium on them. The difference in style, order, coherence, good breeding (for all those, amongst others, the unmasker mentions) the reader will observe, whatever I say of them; and at best they are nothing to the question in hand. For though I am a "tool, pert, childish, starched, impertinent, incoherent, trifling, weak, passionate," &c. commendations I meet with before I get to the 4th page, besides what follows, as, "upstart Racovian," p. 24; "Flourishing scribbler," p. 41; "Dissembler," 106; "Pedantic," 107: I say, although I am all this, and what else he liberally bestows on me in the rest of his book, I may have truth on my side, and that in the present case serves my turn.

Having thus placed the laurels on his own head, and sung applause to his own performance, he, p. 4, enters, as he thinks, upon his business, which ought to be, as he confesses, p. 3, "to make good his former charges." The first whereof he sets down in these words: That "I unwarrantably crowded all the necessary articles of faith into one, with a design of favouring Socinianism."

If it may be permitted to the subdued to be so bold with one who is already conqueror, I desire to know, where that proposition is laid down in these terms, as laid to my charge. Whether it be true or false, shall, if he pleases, be hereafter examined: but it is not, at present, the matter in question. There are certain pro-

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positions, which he having affirmed, and I denied, are under debate between us: and that the dispute may not run into an endless ramble, by multiplying of new, before the points in contest are decided, those ought first to be brought to an issue.

To go on, therefore, in the order of his Socinianism unmasked; (for, p. 3, he has, out of the Mishna, taught me good breeding, "to answer the first, and so in order") the next thing he has against me is p. 5, which, that the reader may understand the force of, I must inform him, that in p. 105, of his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, he said, that I "give this plausible conceit," as he calls it, "over and over again, in these formal words," viz. "That nothing is required to be believed by any Christian man, but this, that Jesus is the Messiah." This I denied. To make it good, Socinianism unmasked, p. 5, he thus argues. First, "It is observable, that this guilty man would be shifting off the indictment, by excepting against the formality of words, as if such were not to be found in his book: but when doth he do this? In the close of it, when this matter was exhausted, and he had nothing else to say," Vind. p. 113, "then he bethinks himself of his salvo," &c. Answ. As if a falsehood were ever the less a falsehood, because it was not opposed, or would grow into a truth, if it were not taken notice of, before the 38th page of the answer. I desire him to show me these "formal words over and over again," in my Reasonableness of Christianity: nor let him hope to evade, by saying I would be "shifting, by excepting against the formality of the words."

To say, that "I have, over and over again, those formal words" in my book, is an assertion of a matter of fact; let him produce the words, and justify his allegation, or confess, that this is an untruth published to the world: and since he makes so bold with truth, in a matter visible to every body, let the world be judge, what credit is to be given to his allegations of matters of fact, in things foreign to what I have printed; and that are not capable of a negative proof. A sam-

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ple whereof the reader has at the entrance, in his introduction, p. A. 4, and the three or four following pages. Where he affirms to the world, not only what I know to be false; but that every one must see, he could not know to be true. For he pretends to know and deliver my thoughts. And what the character is of one that confidently affirms what he does not know, nobody need be told.

But he adds, "I had before pleaded to the indictment, and thereby owned it to be true." This is to make good his promise, p. 3, to keep at a distance from my "feeble strugglings." Here this strong arguer must prove, that what is not answered or denied, in the very beginning of a reply, or before the 11th page, "is owned to be true." In the mean time, till he does that, I shall desire such of my readers, as think the unmasker's veracity worth examining, to see in my Vindication, from p. 174, &c. wherein is contained what I have said about one article, whether I have owned what he charged me with, on that subject.

This proposition then remains upon him still to be proved, viz.

I. "That I have, over and over again, these formal words in my Reasonableness of Christianity, viz. That nothing is required to be believed by any Christian man, but this, That Jesus is the Messiah."

He goes on, p. 5: "And indeed he could do no other; for it was the main work he set himself about, to find but one article of faith in all the chapters of the four evangelists, and the Acts of the Apostles;" this is to make good his promise, p. 3, "To clear his book from those sorry objections and cavils I had raised against it." Several of my "sorry objections and cavils" were to represent to the reader, that a great part of what is said was nothing but suspicions and conjectures; and such he could not but then own them to be. But now he has rid himself of all his conjectures; and has raised them up into direct, positive affirmations;

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which, being said with confidence without proof, who can deny but he has cleared, thoroughly cleared, that part from my "sorry objections and cavils?" He says, "it was the main work I set myself about, to find but one article of faith." This I must take the liberty to deny; and I desire him to prove it. A man may "set himself to find two," or as many as there be, and yet find but one: or a man may "set himself to find but one," and yet find two more. It is no argument, from what a man has found, to prove what was his main work to find, unless where his aim was only to find what there was, whether more or less. For a writer may find the reputation of a poor contemptible railer, nay, of a downright impudent liar, and yet nobody will think it was his main work to find that. Therefore, sir, if you will not find what it is like you did not seek, you must prove those many confident assertions you have published, which I shall give you in tale, whereof this is the second, viz.

II. That "the main business I set myself about, was to find but one article of faith."

In the following part of this sentence, he quotes my own words, with the pages where they are to be found; the first time that, in either of his two books against me, he has vouchsafed to do so, concerning one article, wherewith he has made so much noise. My words in (p. 102 of) my Reasonableness of Christianity stand thus: "for that this is the sole doctrine pressed and required to be believed, in the whole tenour of our Saviour's and his apostles' preaching, we have showed, through the whole history of the Evangelists and Acts, and I challenge them to show, that there was any other doctrine, upon their assent to which, or disbelief of it, men were pronounced believers or unbelievers, and accordingly received into the church of Christ, as members of his body, as far as mere believing could make them so; or else kept out. This was the only Gospel-article of faith which was preached to them."

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Out of this passage, the unmasker sets down these words, " This is the *sole* doctrine pressed and required to be believed, in the whole tenour of our Saviour's and his apostles' preaching," p. 129, this was the *only* Gospel-article of faith which was preached to them."

I shall pass by all other observations, that this way of citing these words would suggest, and only remark, that, if he brought these words, to prove the immediately preceding assertion of his, viz. That " to find out but one article of faith was the main work I set myself about."; this argument, reduced into form, will stand thus:

He who says, that this is the sole doctrine pressed and required to be believed in the whole tenour of our Saviour's and his apostles' preaching, upon their assent to which, or disbelief of it, men were pronounced believers, or unbelievers; and accordingly received into the church of Christ, as members of his body, as far as mere believing could make them so, or else kept out; sets himself to find out but one article of faith, as his main work. But the vindicator did so: *ergo.*

If this were the use he would make of those words of mine cited, I must desire him to prove the major. But he talks so freely, and without book every where, that I suppose he thought himself, by the privilege of a declaimer, exempt from being called strictly to an account for what he loosely says, and from proving what he should be called to an account for. Rail lustily, is a good rule; something of it will stick, true or false, proved or not proved.

If he alleges these words of mine, to answer my demand, Vind. p. 175, where he found that " I contended for one single article of faith, with the exclusion and defiance of all the rest," which he had charged me with; I say, it proves this as little as the former. For to say, " That I had showed through the whole history of the Evangelists, and the Acts, that this is the sole doctrine, or only Gospel-article pressed and required to be believed in the whole tenour of our Saviour and his apostles' preaching; upon their assent to which,

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or disbelieving of it, men were pronounced believers or unbelievers, and accordingly received into the church of Christ, or kept out;" is the simple assertion of a positive matter of fact, and so carries in it no defiance, no, nor exclusion of any other doctrinal, or historical truth, contained in the Scripture: and therefore it remains still on the unmasker to show, where it is I express any defiance of any other truth contained in the word of God; or where I exclude any one doctrine of the Scriptures. So that if it be true, that "I contend for one article," my contention may be without any defiance, or so much as exclusion of any of the rest, notwithstanding any thing contained in these words. Nay, if it should happen that I am in a mistake, and that this was not the sole doctrine which our Saviour and his apostles preached, and, upon their assent to which, men were admitted into the church: yet the unmasker's accusation would be never the truer for that, unless it be necessary, that he that mistakes in one matter of fact should be at defiance with all other truths; or, that he who erroneously says, that our Saviour and his apostles admitted men into the Church, upon the believing him to be the Messiah, does thereby exclude all other truths published to the Jews before, or to Christian believers afterwards.

If these words be brought to prove that I contended "for one article," barely "one article," without any defiance or exclusion annexed to that contention; I say neither do they prove that, as is manifest from the words themselves, as well as from what I said elsewhere, concerning the article of one God. For here I say, this is the only Gospel article, &c. upon which men were pronounced believers; which plainly intimates some other article, known and believed in the world before, and without the preaching of the Gospel.

To this the unmasker thinks he has provided a salvo, in these words, Socinianism unmasked, p. 6, "And when I told him of this one article, he knew well enough that I did not exclude the article of the Deity, for that is a principle of natural religion." If it be

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fit for an unmasker to perceive what is in debate, he would know, that the question is not, what he excluded, or excluded not, but what articles he charged me to have excluded.

Taking it therefore to be his meaning (which it must be, if he meant any thing to the purpose), viz. That when he charged me so often and positively, for contesting for "one article," viz. that "Jesus was the Messiah," he did not intend to accuse me for excluding "the article of the Deity." To prove that he did not so intend it, he tells me, that "I knew that he did not."

Ans. How should I know it? He never told me so, either in his book, or otherwise. This I know, that he said, p. 115, that, "I contended for one article, with the exclusion of all the rest." If then the belief of the Deity be an article of faith, and be not the article of Jesus being the Messiah, it is one "of the rest;" and if "all the rest" were excluded, certainly that being one of "all the rest," must be excluded. How then he could say, "I knew that he excluded it not," *i. e.* meant not that I excluded it, when he positively says, I did "exclude it," I cannot tell, unless he thought that I knew him so well, that when he said one thing, I knew that he meant another, and that the quite contrary.

He now, it seems, acknowledges that I affirmed, that the belief of the Deity, as well as of Jesus being the Messiah, was required to make a man a believer. The believing in "one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth," is one article; and in "Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord," is another article. These, therefore, being "two articles," and both asserted by me, to be required to make a man a Christian, let us see with what truth or ingenuity the unmasker could apply, besides that above-mentioned, these following expressions to me, as he does without any exception: "Why then must there be one article, and no more?" p. 115. "Going to make a religion for his myrmidons, he contracts all into one article, and will trouble them with no more," p. 117. "Away with systems, away with creeds; let us have but one ar-

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ticle, though it be with defiance to all the rest," p. 118. "Thus we see, why he reduces all belief to that one article before rehearsed." p. 120. And all this without any the least exception of the article of a Deity, as he now pretends. Nor could he, indeed, as is evident from his own words, p. 121, 122: "To conclude, this gentleman and his fellows are resolved to be Unitarians; they are for One article of faith, as well as One person in the Godhead: —— But, if these learned men were not prejudiced, ——— they would perceive, that, when the catholic faith is thus brought down to one single article, it will soon be reduced to none; the unit will dwindle into a cypher." By which the reader may see that his intention was, to persuade the world that I reduced all *belief*, the *catholic faith*, (they are in his own words) "to one single article, and no more." For if he had given but the least hint, that I allowed of Two, all the wit and strength of argument, contained in Unitarians, unit and cypher, with which he winds up all, had been utterly lost, and dwindled into palpable nonsense.

To demonstrate that this was the sense he would be understood in, we are but to observe what he says again, p. 50 of his Socinianism unmasked, where he tells his readers, that "I and my friends have new modelled the Apostles' Creed; yea, indeed, have presented them with *one* article, instead of *twelve*." And hence we may see what sincerity there is in the reason he brings, to prove that he did not exclude the "article of the Deity." "For," says he, p. 6, "that is a principle of natural religion."

Ans. *Ergo*, he did not in positive words, without any exception, say, I reduced "all belief, the catholic faith, to one single article, and no more." But to make good his promise, "not to resemble me in the little artifices of evading," he wipes his mouth, and says at the bottom of this page, "But the reader sees his [the vindicator's] shuffling." Whilst the article of "One God" is a part of "*all* belief, a part of the catholic faith," *all* which he affirmed I excluded, but the

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one article concerning the Messiah; every one will see where the shuffling is: and, if it be not clear enough from those words themselves, let those above quoted, out of p. 50, of his Socinianism unmasked, where he says, that "I have new modelled the Apostles' Creed, and presented the world with *one* article instead of *twelve*," by an interpretation of them. For, if the article of "one eternal God, maker of heaven and earth," be one of the articles of the Apostles' Creed, and the one article I presented them with be not that, it is plain he did and would be understood to mean, that by my one article I excluded that of the one eternal God, which branch soever of religion, either natural or revealed, it belongs to.

I do not endeavour to "persuade the reader," as he says, p. 6, "that he misunderstood me," but yet every body will see that he misrepresented me. And I challenge him to say, that those expressions above quoted out of him, concerning "one article," in the obvious sense of the words, as they stand in his accusation of me, were true.

This flies so directly in his face, that he labours mightily to get it off, and therefore adds these words, "My discourse did not treat, (neither doth his book run that way) of principles of natural religion, but of the revealed, and particularly the Christian: accordingly, this was it that I taxed him with, That, of all the principles and articles of Christianity, he chose out but one, as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian."

Ans. His book was of ——— atheism, which one may think should make his "discourse treat of natural religion." But I pass by that, and bid him tell me where he taxed me, "That of all the principles and articles of Christianity, I chose out but one:" let him show, in all his discourse, but such a word, or any thing said, like "one article of Christianity," and I will grant that he meant particularly, but spoke generally; misled his reader, and left himself a subterfuge. But if there be no expression to be found in him, tending that way, all this is but the covering of one falsehood with another,

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which thereby only becomes the grosser. Though if he had in express words taxed me, "That, of all the principles and articles of the Christian religion, I chose out but one, that would not at all help him, till he farther declares, that the belief of one God is not an "article of the Christian religion." For, of "*all* the articles of the Christian religion," he says, "I chose but one;" which not being that of a Deity, his words plainly import, that that was left out amongst the rest, unless it be possible for a man to choose but one article of the Christian religion, viz. That "Jesus is the Messiah;" and at the same time, to choose two articles of the Christian religion, viz. That there is one eternal God, and that Jesus is the Messiah. If he had spoken clearly, and like a fair man, he should have said, That he taxed me with choosing but one article of revealed religion. This had been plain and direct to his purpose: but then he knew the falsehood of it would be too obvious: for, in the seven pages, wherein he taxes me so much with One article, Christianity is several times named, though not once to the purpose he here pretends. But revelation is not so much as once mentioned in them, nor, as I remember, in any of the pages he bestows upon me.

To conclude, the several passages above quoted out of him, concerning one sole article, are all in general terms, without any the least limitation or restriction; and, as they stand in him, fit to persuade the reader, that I excluded all other articles whatsoever, but that one of "Jesus the Messiah:" and if, in that sense, they are not true, they are so many falsehoods of his, repeated there to mislead others into a wrong opinion of me. For, if he had a mind his readers should have been rightly informed, why was it not as easy once to explain himself, as so often to affirm it in general and unrestrained terms? This, all the boasted strength of the unmasker will not be able to get him out of. This very well becomes one, who so loudly charges me with shuffling. Having repeated the same thing over and over again, in as general terms as was possible, without any the least limitation, in the whole discourse, to have nothing

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else to plead, when required to prove it, but that it was meant in a limited sense, in an unmasker, is not shuffling. For, by this way, he may have the convenience to say, and unsay, what he pleases; to vent what stuff he thinks for his turn; and, when he is called to account for it, reply, He meant no such thing. Should any one publish, that the unmasker had but "one article of faith, and no more," viz. That the doctrines in fashion, and likely to procure preferment, are alone to be received; that all his belief was comprised in this "one single article:" and, when such a talker was demanded to prove his assertion, should he say, he meant to except his belief of the Apostles' Creed: would he not, notwithstanding such a plea, be thought a shuffling liar? And, if the unmasker can no otherwise prove those universal propositions above cited, but by saying, he meant them with a tacit restriction, (for none is expressed) they will still, and for ever remain to be accounted for, by his veracity.

What he says in the next paragraph, p. 7, of my "splitting one article into two," is just of the same force, and with the same ingenuity. I had said, That the belief of one God was necessary; which is not denied: I had also said, "That the belief of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah, together with those concomitant articles of his resurrection, rule, and coming again to judge the world, was necessary," p. 151. And again, p. 157, "That God had declared, whoever would believe Jesus to be the Saviour promised, and take him now raised from the dead, and constituted the Lord and Judge of all men, to be their King and Ruler, should be saved." This made me say, "These, and those articles" (in words of the plural number) more than once; evidence enough to any but a caviller, that I "contend not for one single article, and no more." And to mind him of it, I, in my Vindication, reprinted one of those places, where I had done so; and, that he might not, according to his manner, overlook what does not please him, the words, *these are articles*, were printed in great characters. Whereupon he makes this remark, p. 7, "And though since

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he has tried to split this one into two, p. 28, "yet he labours in vain: for to believe Jesus to be the Messiah, amounts to the same with believing him to be King and Ruler; his being anointed, (*i. e.* being the Messiah) including that in it: yet he has the vanity to add in great characters, *these are articles;* as if the putting them into these great letters would make one article two."

Ans. Though no letters will make one article two; yet that there is one God, and Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God, shall come to judge the quick and the dead, are in the Apostles' Creed, set down as more than one article, and therefore may, very properly, be called *these articles*, without splitting one into two.

What, in my Reasonableness of Christianity, I have said of one article, I shall always own; and in what sense I have said it, is easy to be understood; and with a man of the least candour, whose aim was truth, and not wrangling, it would not have occasioned one word of dispute. But as for this unmasker, who makes it his business, not to convince me of any mistakes in my opinion, but barely to misrepresent me; my business at present with him is, to show the world, that what he has captiously and scurrilously said of me, relating to one article, is false; and that he neither has nor can prove one of those assertions concerning it, above cited out of him, in his own words. Nor let him pretend a meaning against his direct words: such a caviller as he, who would shelter himself under the pretence of a meaning, whereof there are no footsteps; whose disputes are only calumnies directed against the author, without examining the truth or falsehood of what I had published; is not to expect the allowances one would make to a fair and ingenuous adversary, who showed so much concern for truth, that he treated of it with a seriousness due to the weightiness of the matter, and used other arguments besides obloquy, clamour, and falsehoods, against what he thought error. And therefore I again positively demand of him to prove

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these words of his to be true, or confess that he cannot; viz.

III. "That I contend for one article of faith, with the exclusion and defiance of all the rest."

Two other instances of this sort of arguments I gave in the 175th page of my Vindication, out of the 115th and 119th pages of his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism; and I here demand of him again to show, since he has not thought fit hitherto to give any answer to it,

IV. "Where I urge, that there must be nothing in Christianity that is not plain, and exactly levelled to all men's mother-wit, and every common apprehension."

Or, where he finds, in my Reasonableness of Christianity, this other proposition:

V. "That the very manner of every thing in Christianity must be clear and intelligible; every thing must immediately be comprehended by the weakest noddle; or else it is no part of religion, especially of Christianity."

These things he must prove that I have said: I put it again upon him to show where I said them, or else to confess the forgery: for till he does one or the other, he shall be sure to have these, with a large catalogue of other falsehoods, laid before him.

Page 26 of his Socinianism unmasked, he endeavours to make good his saying, that "I set up one article, with defiance to all the rest," in these words: "for what is excluding them wholly, but defying them? Wherefore, seeing he utterly excludes all the rest, by representing them as *useless* to the making a man a Christian, which is the design of his whole undertaking, it is manifest that he defies them."

Answ. This at least is manifest from hence, that the unmasker knows not or cares not what he says.

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For whoever, but he, thought, that a bare exclusion, or passing by, was defiance? If he understands so, I would advise him not to seek preferment. For exclusions will happen; and if every exclusion be defiance, a man had need be well assured of his own good temper, who shall not think his peace and charity in danger, amongst so many enemies that are at defiance with him? Defiance, if, with any propriety, it can be spoken of an article of faith, must signify a professed enmity to it. For, in its proper use, which is to persons, it signifies an open and declared enmity, raised to that height, that he, in whom it is, challenges the party defied to battle, that he may there wreak his hatred on his enemy, in his destruction. So that, "my defiance of all the rest" remains still to be proved.

But, secondly, there is another thing manifest from these words of his, viz. that notwithstanding his great brags in his first paragraph, his main skill lies in fancying what would be for his turn, and then confidently fathering it upon me. It never entered into my thoughts, nor, I think, into any body's else, (I must always except the acute unmasker, who makes no difference between useful and necessary) that all but the fundamental articles of the Christian faith were useless to make a man a Christian; though if it be true, that the belief of the fundamentals alone (be they few or many) is all that is necessary to his being made a Christian, all that may any way persuade him to believe them, may certainly be useful towards the making him a Christian: and therefore here again I must propose to him, and leave it with him to be showed where it is,

VI. "I have represented all the rest as useless to the making a man a Christian?" And how it appears, that "this is the design of my whole undertaking."

In his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism he says, page 115, "What makes him contend for one single article, with the exclusion of all the rest? He pretends it is this, that all men ought to understand their religion." This reasoning I disowned, p. 174

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of my Vindication, and intimated, that he should have quoted the page where I so pretended.

To this, p. 26, he tells me with great confidence, and in abundance of words, as we shall see by and by, that I had done so; as if repetition were a proof. He had done better to have quoted one place where I so pretend. Indeed, p. 27, for want of something better, he quotes these words of mine out of p. 157 of the Reasonableness of Christianity: "The all-merciful God seems herein to have consulted the poor of this world, and the bulk of mankind. *These are articles* that the labouring and illiterate man may comprehend." I ask, whether it be possible for one to bring any thing more direct against himself? The thing he was to prove was, that "I contended for one single article, with the exclusion of all the rest," because I pretended, that all men ought to understand their religion;" *i. e.* the reason I gave, why there was to be "but one single article in religion, with the exclusion of all the rest," was, because men ought to understand their religion. And the place he brings, to prove my contending upon that ground, "for one single article, with the exclusion of all the rest," is a passage wherein I speak of more than one article, and say, "these articles." Whether I said, "these articles" properly or improperly, it matters not, in the present case; (and that we have examined in another place) it is plain I meant more than one article, when I said, "these articles;" and did not think, that the labouring and illiterate man could not understand them, if they were more than one: and therefore I pretended not, that there must be but one, because by illiterate men more than one could not be understood. The rest of this paragraph is nothing but a repetition of the same assertion, without proof, which, with the unmasker, often passes for a way of proving, but with nobody else.

But, that I may keep that distance, which he boasts there is betwixt his and my way of writing, I shall not say this without proof. One instance of his repetition, of which there is such plenty in his book, pray take here. His business, p. 26, is to prove, that "I pretended that I contended for one single article, with

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the exclusion of all the rest, because all men ought to understand their religion;" p. 174 of my Vindication I denied that I had so pretended. To convince me that I had, thus he proceeds:

Unmasker. "He founds his conceit" of one article "partly upon this, that a multitude of doctrines is obscure and hard to be understood."

Answer. You say it, and had said it before: but I ask you, as I did before, Where I did so?"

Unm. "And therefore he trusses all up in one article, that the poor people and bulk of mankind may bear it."

Answ. I desire again to know where I made that inference, and argued so, for "one article?"

Unm. "This is the scope of a great part of his book.

Answ. This is saying again: show it once.

Unm. "But his memory does not keep pace with his invention, and thence he says, he remembers nothing of this in his book," Vind. p. 174.

Answ. This is to say that it is in my book. You have said it more than once already; I demand of you to show me where.

Unm. "This worthy writer does not know his own reasoning, that he uses."

Answ. I ask, Where does he use that reasoning?

Unm. "As particularly thus, that he troubles Christian men with no more, but one article: *because* that is intelligible, and all people, high and low, may comprehend it."

Answ. We have heard it affirmed by you, over and over again, but the question still is, "Where is that way of arguing to be found in my book?"

Unm. "For he has chosen out, as he thinks, a plain and easy article. Whereas the others, which are commonly propounded, are not generally agreed on (he saith) and are dubious and uncertain. But the believing that Jesus is the Messiah has nothing of doubtfulness or obscurity in it."

Answ. The word "For," in the beginning of this sentence, makes it stand for one of your reasons; though it be but a repetition of the same thing in other words.

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Unm. "This the reader will find to be the drift and design of several of his pages."

Answ. This must signify "that I trouble men with no more but one article, because only one is intelligible," and then it is but a repetition. If any thing else be meant by the word This, it is nothing to the purpose. For that I said, that all things necessary to be believed are plain in Scripture, and easy to be understood, I never denied; and should be very sorry, and recant it, if I had.

Unm. "And the reason why I did not quote any single one of them was, because he insists on it so long together: and spins it out after his way, in p. 156 of his Reasonableness of Christianity, where he sets down the short, plain, easy, and intelligible summary (as he calls it) of religion, couched in a single article: he immediately adds: 'the all-merciful God seems herein to have consulted the poor of this world, and the bulk of mankind: these are articles' (whereas he had set down but one) 'that the labouring and illiterate man may comprehend.'

Answ. If "my insisting on it so long together" was the cause why, in your thoughts of the causes of atheism," you did not quote any single passage; methinks here, in your Socinianism unmasked, where you knew it was expected of you, my "insisting on it," as you say, "so long together," might have afforded, at least, one quotation to your purpose.

Unm. "He assigns this as a ground, why it was God's pleasure, that there should be but *one point* of faith, *because* thereby religion may be understood the better; the generality of people may comprehend it."

Answ. I hear you say it again, but want a proof still, and ask, "where I assign that ground?"

Unm. "This he represents as a great kindness done by God to man; whereas the variety of articles would be hard to be understood."

Answ. Again the same cabbage; an affirmation, but no proof.

Unm. "This he enlarges upon, and flourishes it

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over, after his fashion: and yet desires to know, When he said so?" p. 175, Vindic.

Answ. And if I did, let the world here take a sample of the unmasker's ability, or truth, who spends above two whole pages, 26, 27, in repetitions of the same assertion, without the producing any but one place for proof; and that too against him, as I have shown. But he has not yet done with confounding me by dint of repetition: he goes on,

Unm. "Good sir, let me be permitted to acquaint you, that your memory is as defective as your judgment."

Answ. I thank you for the regard you have had to it; for often repetition is a good help to a bad memory. In requital, I advise you to have some eye to your own memory and judgment too. For one, or both of them, seem a little to blame, in the reason you subjoin to the foregoing words, viz.

Unm. "For in the very Vindication, you attribute it to the goodness and condescension of the Almighty, that he requires nothing, as absolutely necessary to be believed, but what is suited to vulgar capacities, and the comprehension of illiterate men."

Answ. I will, for the unmasker's sake, put this argument of his into a syllogism. If the vindicator, in his Vindication, attributes it to the goodness and condescension of the Almighty, that he requires nothing to be believed, but what is suited to vulgar capacities, and the comprehension of illiterate men; then he did, in his Reasonableness of Christianity, pretend, that the reason, why he contended for One article, with the exclusion of all the rest, was because all men ought to understand their religion.

But the vindicator, in his Vindication, attributes it to the goodness and condescension of Almighty God, that he requires nothing to be believed, but what is suited to vulgar capacities, and the comprehension of illiterate men,

Ergo, in his Reasonableness of Christianity, he pretended, that the reason why he contended for one

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article, with the exclusion of all the rest, was, because all men ought to understand their religion.

This was the proposition to be proved, and which, as he confesses here, p. 26, I denied to remember to be in my Reasonableness of Christianity. Who can but admire his logic!

But, besides the strength of judgment which you have showed in this clear and cogent reasoning, Does not your memory too deserve its due applause? You tell me, in your Socinianism unmasked, that in p. 175 of my Vindication, I desired to know when I said so. To which desire of mine you reply in these words before cited: "Good sir, let me be permitted to acquaint you, that your memory is as defective as your judgment; for, in the very Vindication, you attribute it to the goodness and condescension of the Almighty, that he requires nothing, as absolutely necessary to be believed, but what is suited to vulgar capacities, and the comprehension of illiterate men," p. 30.

Sure the unmasker thinks himself at cross-questions. I ask him, in the 29th page of my Vindication, *When* I said so? And he answers, that I had said so in the 30th page of my Vindication; *i. e.* when I writ the 29th page, I asked the question, When I had said what he charged me with saying? And I am answered, I had said in the 30th page, which was not yet written: *i. e.* I asked the question to-day, *When* I had said so? And I am answered, I had said it to-morrow. As opposite and convincing an answer, to make good his charge, as if he had said, To-morrow I found a horse-shoe. But perhaps this judicious disputant will ease himself of this difficulty, by looking again into the 175th page of my Vindication, out of which he cites these words for mine: "I desire to know, When I said so?" But my words in that place are, "I desire to know, *Where* I said so?" A mark of his exactness in quoting, when he vouchsafes to do it. For unmaskers, when they turn disputants, think it the best way to talk at large, and charge home in generals: but do not often find it convenient to quote pages, set down words, and come to particulars. But,

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if he had quoted my words right, his answer had been just as pertinent. For I ask him, *Where*, in my Reasonableness of Christianity, I had said so? And he answers, I had said so in my Vindication. For where, in my question, refers to my Reasonableness of Christianity, which the unmasker had seen, and charged with this saying; and could not refer to my Vindication, which he had not yet seen, nor to a passage in it, which was not then written. But this is nothing with an unmasker; therefore, what is yet worse, those words of mine, Vindication, p. 175, relate not to the passage he is here proving I had said, but to another different from it; as different as it is to say, "That, because all men are to understand their religion, therefore there is to be but one article in it;" and to say, "that there must be nothing in Christianity that is not plain, and exactly levelled to all men's mother-wit:" both which he falsely charges on me; but it is only to the latter of them that my words, "I desire to know, where I said so?" are applied.

Perhaps the well-meaning man sees no difference between these propositions, yet I shall take the liberty to ask him again, Where I said either of them, as if they were two? Although he should accuse me again, of "excepting against the formality of words," and doing so foolish a thing, as to expect, that a disputing unmasker should account for his words, or any proposition he advances. It is his privilege to plead, he did not mean as his words import, and without any more ado he is assoiled; and he is the same unmasker he was before. But let us hear him out on the argument he was upon, for his repetitions on it are not yet done. His next words are,

Unm. "It is clear then, that you found your *one* article on this, that it is suited to the vulgar capacities: whereas the other articles mentioned by me are obscure and ambiguous, and therefore surpass the comprehension of the illiterate."

Answ. The latter part, indeed, is now the first time imputed to me; but all the rest is nothing but an un-

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proved repetition, though ushered in with "it is clear then;" words that should have a proof going before them.

Unm. "But yet you pretend, that you have forgot that any such thing was said by you."

Answ. I have indeed forgot, and, notwithstanding all your pains by so many repetitions, to beat it into my head, I fear I shall never remember it.

Unm. "Which shows that you are careless of your words, and that you forget what you write."

Answ. So you told me before, and this repeating of it does no more convince me than that did.

Unm. "What shall we say to such an oblivious author?"

Answ. Show it him in his book, or else he will never be able to remember that it is there, nor any body else be able to find it.

Unm. "He takes no notice of what falls from his own pen."

Answ. So you have told him more than once. Try him once with showing it him, amongst other things which fell from his own pen, and see what then he will say: that perhaps may refresh his memory.

Unm. "And therefore, within a page or two, he confutes himself, and gives himself the lie."

Answ. It is a fault he deserves to be told of, over and over again. But he says, he shall not be able to find the two pages wherein he "gives himself the lie," unless you set down their numbers, and the words in them, which confute, and which are confuted.

I beg my reader's pardon, for laying before him so large a pattern of our unmasker's new-fashioned stuff; his fine tissue of argumentation not easily to be matched, but by the same hand. But it lay altogether in p. 26, 27, 28; and it was fit the reader should have this one instance of the excellencies he promises in his first paragraph, in opposition to my "impertinencies, incoherences, weak and feeble strugglings." Other excellencies he there promised, upon the same ground, which I shall give my reader a taste of in fit places; not but that the whole is of a piece, and one cannot miss

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some of them in every page; but to transcribe them all, would be more than they are worth. If any one desires more plenty, I send him to his book itself. But saying a thousand times not being proving once, it remains upon him still to show,

VII. Where, in my "Reasonableness of Christianity, I pretend that I contend for one single article, with the exclusion of all the rest, because all men ought to understand their religion."

And in the next place, where it is that I say,

VIII. "That there must be nothing in Christianity that is not plain and exactly level to all men's mother-wit."

Let us now return to his 8th page: for the bundling together, as was fit, all that he has said, in distant places, upon the subject of One article, has made me trespass a little against the Jewish character of a well-bred man, recommended by him to me, out of the Mishna. Though I propose to myself to follow him, as near as I can, step by step, as he proceeds.

In the 110th and 111th pages of his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, he gave us a list of his 'fundamental articles:' upon which I thus applied myself to him, Vind. p. 168, &c. "Give me leave now to ask you seriously, Whether these you have here set down under the title of "fundamental doctrines," are such (when reduced to propositions) that every one of them is required to make a man a Christian, and such as, without the actual belief thereof, he cannot be saved? If they are not so, every one of them, you may call them "fundamental doctrines" as much as you please, they are not of those doctrines of faith I was speaking of; which are only such as are required to be actually believed to make a man a Christian." And again, Vindic. p. 169, I asked him, "Whether just these, neither more nor less," were those necessary articles?

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To which we have his answer, Socinianism unmasked, p. 8, &c. From p. 8 to 20 he has quoted near forty texts of Scripture, of which he saith, p. 21, "Thus I have briefly set before the reader those evangelical truths, those Christian principles, which belong to the very essence of Christianity: I have proved them to be such, and I have reduced most of them to certain propositions, which is a thing the vindicator called for."

Answ. Yes: but that was not all the vindicator called for, and had reason to expect. For I asked, "Whether those the unmasker gave us, in his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism," were the fundamental articles, "without an actual belief whereof a man could not be a Christian; just all, neither more nor less?" This I had reason to demand from him, or from any one, who questions that part of my book; and I shall insist upon it, until he does it, or confesses he cannot. For having set down the articles, which the Scripture, upon a diligent search, seemed to me to require as necessary, and only necessary; I shall not lose my time in examining what another says against those fundamentals, which I have gathered out of the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles, until he gives me a list of his fundamentals, which he will abide by; that so, by comparing them together, I may see which is the true catalogue of necessaries. For after so serious and diligent a search, which has given me light and satisfaction in this great point, I shall not quit it, and set myself on float again, at the demand of any one, who would have me be of his faith, without telling me what it is. Those fundamentals the Scripture has so plainly given, and so evidently determined, that it would be the greatest folly imaginable to part with this rule for asking; and give up myself blindly to the conduct of one, who either knows not, or will not tell me, what are the points necessary to be believed to make me a Christian. He that shall find fault with my collection of fundamentals, only to unsettle me, and not give me a better of his own, I shall not think worth minding, until, like a fair man, he puts himself upon equal terms, and makes up

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the defects of mine, by a complete one of his own. For a deficiency, or error, in one necessary, is as fatal, and as certainly excludes a man from being a Christian, as in an hundred. When any one offers me a complete catalogue of his fundamentals, he does not unreasonably demand me to quit mine for nothing: I have then one, that being set by mine, I may compare them; and so be able to choose the true and perfect one, and relinquish the other.

He that does not do this, plainly declares, that, (without showing me the certain way to salvation) he expects, that I should depend on him with an implicit faith, whilst he reserves to himself the liberty to require of me to believe what he shall think fit, as he sees occasion; and in effect says thus, "Distrust those fundamentals, which the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles have showed to be all that is necessary to be believed, to make a man a Christian; and, though I cannot tell you what are those other articles which are necessary and sufficient to make a man a Christian, yet take me for your guide, and that is as good as if I made up, in a complete list, the defects of your fundamentals." To which this is a sufficient answer, "Si quid novisti rectiùs, imperti; si non, his utere mecum."

The unmasker, of his own accord, p. 110 of his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, sets down several, which he calls "fundamental doctrines." I ask him, whether those be all? For answer, he adds more to them in his Socinianism unmasked: but in a great pet refuses to tell me whether this second list of fundamentals be complete: and, instead of answering so reasonable a demand, pays me with ill language, in these words, p. 22, subjoined to those last quoted, "If what I have said will not content him, I am sure I can do nothing that will; and, therefore, if he should capriciously require any thing more, it would be as great folly in me to comply with it, as it is in him to move it." If I did ask a question, which troubles you, be not so angry; you yourself were the occasion of it. I proposed my collection of fundamentals, which I had,

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with great care, sought; and thought I had found clear in the Scripture; you tell me no, it is imperfect, and offer me one of your own. I ask, whether that be perfect? Thereupon you grow into choler, and tell me it is a foolish question. Why! then I think it was not very wise in you so forwardly to offer one, unless you had one ready, not liable to the same exception. Would you have me so foolish, to take a list of fundamentals from you, who have not yet one for yourself; nor are yet resolved with yourself, what doctrines are to be put in, or left out of it? Farther, pray tell me, if you had a settled collection of fundamentals, that you would stand to, why should I take them from you, upon your word, rather than from an Anabaptist, or a Quaker, or an Arminian, or a Socinian, or a Lutheran, or a Papist; who, I think, are not perfectly agreed with you, or one another in fundamentals? And yet, there is none amongst them, that I have not as much reason to believe, upon his bare word, as an unmasker, who, to my certain knowledge, will make bold with truth. If you set up for infallibility, you may have some claim to have your bare word taken, before any other but the pope. But yet, if you demand to be an unquestionable proposer of what is absolutely necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, you must perform it a little better than hitherto you have done. For it is not enough, sometimes to give us texts of Scripture, sometimes propositions of your own framing, and sometimes texts of Scripture, out of which they are to be framed; as page 14, you say, "These and the like places afford us such fundamental and necessary doctrines as these:" and again, p. 16, after the naming several other texts of Scripture, you add, "which places yield us such propositions as these;" and then in both places set down what you think fit to draw out of them. And page 15, you have these words: "and here, likewise, it were easy to show, that adoption, justification, pardon of sins, &c. which are privileges and benefits bestowed upon us by the Messiah, are necessary matters of our belief." By all which, as well as the whole frame, wherein you make show of giving us your fundamental articles, it is plain,

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that what you have given us there is nothing less than a complete collection of fundamentals, even in your own opinion of it.

But, good sir, Why is it a foolish question in me? You have found fault with my summary for being short: the defect in my collection of necessary articles has raised your zeal into so severe censures, and drawn upon me, from you, so heavy a condemnation, that, if half you have said of me be true, I am in a very ill case, for having so curtailed the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. Is it folly, then, for me to ask from you a complete creed? If it be so dangerous (as certainly it is) to fail in any necessary article of faith, Why is it folly in me to be instant with you, to give me them all? Or why is it folly in you to grant so reasonable a demand? A short faith, defective in necessaries, is no more tolerable in you than in me; nay, much more inexcusable, if it were for no other reason but this, that you rest in it yourself, and would impose it on others; and yet do not yourself know or believe it to be complete. For if you do, why dare you not say so, and give it us all entire, in plain propositions; and not, as you have in a great measure done here, give only the texts of Scripture, from whence, you say, necessary articles are to be drawn? Which is too great an uncertainty for doctrines, absolutely necessary. For, possibly all men do not understand those texts alike, and some may draw articles out of them quite different from your system; and so, though they agree in the same texts, may not agree in the same fundamentals: and, till you have set down plainly and distinctly your articles, that you think contained in them, cannot tell whether you will allow them to be Christians, or no. For you know, sir, several inferences are often drawn from the same text; and the different systems of dissenting (I was going to say Christians, but that none must be so, but those who receive your collection of fundamentals, when you please to give it them) professors are all founded on the Scripture.

Why, I beseech you, is mine a foolish question to ask, "What are the necessary articles of faith?" It is of no less consequence than, nor much different from, the

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jailor's question in the sixteenth of the Acts, "What shall I do to be saved?" And that was not, that ever I heard, counted by any one a foolish question. You grant, there are articles necessary to be believed for salvation: Would it not then be wisdom to know them? Nay, is it not our duty to know and believe them? If not, why do you, with so much outcry, reprehend me, for not knowing them? Why do you fill your books with such variety of invectives, as if you could never say enough, nor bad enough, against me, for having left out some of them? And, if it be so dangerous, so criminal to miss any of them, Why is it a folly in me, to move you to give me a complete list?

If fundamentals are to be known, easy to be known, (as, without doubt, they are) then a catalogue may be given of them. But, if they are not, if it cannot certainly be determined, which are they, but the doubtful knowledge of them depends upon guesses, Why may not I be permitted to follow my guesses, as well as you yours? Or why, of all others, must you prescribe your guesses to me, when there are so many that are as ready to prescribe as you, and of as good authority? The pretence, indeed, and clamour is religion, and the saving of souls: but your business, it is plain, is nothing but to over-rule and prescribe, and be hearkened to as a dictator; and not to inform, teach, and instruct in the sure way to salvation. Why else do you so start and fling, when I desire to know of you, what is necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, when this is the only material thing in controversy between us; and my mistake in it has made you begin a quarrel with me, and let loose your pen against me in no ordinary way of reprehension?

Besides, in this way which you take, you will be in no better a case than I. For another having as good a claim to have his guesses give the rule as you yours; or to have his system received, as well as you yours; he will complain of you as well, and upon as good grounds, as you do of me; and (if he have but as much zeal for his orthodoxy as you show for yours) in as civil, well-bred, and Christian-like language.

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In the next place, pray tell me, Why would it be folly in you to comply with what I require of you? Would it not be useful to me, to be set right in this matter? If so, Why is it folly in you to set me right? Consider me, if you please, as one of your parishioners, who (after you have resolved which catalogue of fundamentals to give him, either that in your Thoughts of the Causes of Atheism, or this other here, in your Socinianism unmasked; for they are not both the same, nor either of them perfect) asked you, "Are these all fundamental articles necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian; and are there no more but these?" Would you answer him, that it was folly in you to comply with him in what he desired? Is it of no moment to know, what is required of men to be believed; without a belief of which they are not Christians, nor can be saved? And is it folly in a minister of the Gospel, to inform one committed to his instruction, in so material a point as this, which distinguishes believers from unbelievers? Is it folly in one, whose business it is to bring men to be Christians, and to salvation, to resolve a question, by which they may know, whether they are Christians or no; and, without a resolution of which, they cannot certainly know their condition, and the state they are in? Is it besides your commission and business, and therefore a folly, to extend your care of souls so far as this, to those who are committed to your charge?

Sir, I have a title to demand this of you, as if I were your parishioner: you have forced yourself upon me for a teacher, in this very point, as if you wanted a parishioner to instruct: and therefore I demand it of you, and shall insist upon it, till you either do it, or confess you cannot. Nor shall it excuse you to say it is capriciously required. For this is no otherwise capricious, than all questions are capricious to a man that cannot answer them; and such an one, I think, this is to you. For, if you could answer it, nobody can doubt but that you would, and that with confidence: for nobody will suspect it is the want of that makes you so reserved. This is, indeed, a frequent way of answering questions, by men, that cannot otherwise

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cover the absurdities of their opinions, and their insolence of expecting to be believed upon their bare words, by saying they are capriciously asked, and deserve no other answer.

But how far soever capriciousness (when proved, for saying is not enough) may excuse from answering a material question, yet your own words here will clear this from being a capricious question in me. For that those texts of Scripture which you have set down do not, upon your own grounds, contain all the fundamental doctrines of religion, all that is necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, what you say a little lower, in this very page, as well as in other places, does demonstrate. Your words are, "I think I have sufficiently proved, that there are other doctrines besides that [Jesus is the Messiah] which are required to be believed to make a man a Christian; Why did the apostles write these doctrines? Was it not, that those they writ to might give their assent to them?" This argument, for the necessity of believing the texts you cite from their being set down in the New Testament, you urged thus, p. 9, "Is this set down to no purpose in these inspired epistles? Is it not requisite that we should know it and believe? And again, p. 29, "they are in our Bibles to that very purpose, to be believed." If then it be necessary to know and believe those texts of Scripture you have collected, because the apostles writ them, and they were not "set down to no purpose: and they are set down in our Bibles on purpose to be believed:" I have reason to demand of you other texts besides those you have enumerated, as containing points necessary to be believed; because there are other texts which the apostles writ, and were not "set down to no purpose, and are in our Bibles, on purpose to be believed," as well as those which you have cited.

Another reason of doubting, and consequently of demanding, whether those propositions you have set down for fundamental doctrines be every one of them necessary to be believed, and all that are necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, I have from your next argument; which, joined to the former, stands thus,

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p. 22: "Why did the apostles write these doctrines? Was it not that those they writ to might give their assent to them? Nay, did they not require assent to them? Yes, verily; for this is to be proved from the nature of the things contained in these doctrines, which are such as had immediate respect to the occasion, author, way, means, and issue, of their redemption and salvation." If therefore all "things which have an immediate respect to the occasion, author, way, means, and issue of men's redemption and salvation," are those and those only, which are necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian; may a man not justly doubt, whether those propositions, which the unmasker has set down, contain all those things, and whether there be not other things contained in other texts of Scripture, or in some of those cited by him, but otherwise understood, that have as immediate a "respect to the occasion, author, way, means, and issue of men's redemption and salvation," as those he has set down? and therefore I have reason to demand a completer list. For at best, to tell us of "all things that have an immediate respect to the occasion, author, way, means, and issue of men's redemption and salvation," is but a general description of fundamentals, with which some may think some articles agree, and others, others: and the terms, "immediate respect," may give ground enough for difference about them, to those who agree that the rest of your description is right. My demand therefore is not a general description of fundamentals, but, for the reasons above-mentioned, the particular articles themselves, which are necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian.

It is not my business at present, to examine the validity of these arguments of his, to prove all the propositions to be necessary to be believed, which he has here, in his Socinianism unmasked, set down as such. The use I make of them now, is to show the reason they afford me to doubt, that those propositions, which he has given us, for doctrines necessary to be believed, are either not all such, or more than all, by his own rule: and therefore, I must desire him to give us a completer

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creed, that we may know, what in his sense is necessary and enough to make a man a Christian.

Nor will it be sufficient, in this case, to do what he tells us he has done, in these words, p. 21, "I have briefly set before the reader those evangelical truths, those Christian principles, which belong to the very essence of Christianity;"———and "I have reduced most of them to certain propositions, which is a thing the vindicator called for, p. 16. With submission, I think he mistakes the vindicator. What I called for was, not that "most of them should be reduced to certain propositions," but that all of them should: and the reason of my demanding that was plain, viz. that then, having the unmasker's creed in clear and distinct propositions, I might be able to examine whether it was what God in the Scriptures indispensably required of every man to make him a Christian, that so I might thereby correct the errors or defects of what I at present apprehend the Scripture taught me in the case.

The unmasker endeavours to excuse himself from answering my question by another exception against it, p. 24, in these words: "Surely none, but this upstart Racovian, will have the confidence to deny, that these articles of faith are such as are necessary to constitute a Christian, as to the intellectual and doctrinal part of Christianity; such as must, *in some measure*, be known and assented to by him. Not that a man is supposed, every moment, actually to exert his assent and belief; for none of the moral virtues, none of the evangelical graces, are exerted thus always. Wherefore that question," in p. 168, "though he says he asks it" (seriously) "might have been spared, Whether every one of these fundamentals is required to be believed to make a man a Christian, and such as, without the actual belief thereof, he cannot be saved?" Here is seriousness pretended where there is none; for the design is only to cavil, and (if he can) to expose my assertion. But he is not able to do it; for all his critical demands are answered in these few words, viz. That the intellectual (as well as moral endowments) are never supposed to be always in act: they are

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exerted upon occasion, not all of them at a time. And therefore he mistakes, if he thinks, or rather as he objects without thinking, that these doctrines, if they be fundamental and necessary, must be always actually believed. No man, besides himself, ever started such a thing."

This terrible long combat has the unmasker managed with his own shadow, to confound the seriousness of my question; and, as he says himself, is come off, not only safe and sound, but triumphant. But for all that, sir, may not a man's question be serious, though he should chance to express it ill? I think you and I were not best to set up for critics in language, and nicety of expression, for fear we should set the world a laughing. Yet, for this once, I shall take the liberty to defend mine here. For I demand, in what expression of mine, I said or supposed that a man should every moment actually exert his assent to any proposition required to be believed? Cannot a man say, that the unmasker cannot be admitted to any preferment in the church of England, without an actual assent to, or subscribing of the thirty-nine articles; unless it be supposed, that he must every moment, from the time he first read, assented to, and subscribed those articles, until he received institution and induction, "actually exert his assent" to every one of them, and repeat his subscription? In the same sense it is literally true, that a man cannot be admitted into the church of Christ, or into heaven, without actually believing all the articles necessary to make a man a Christian, without supposing that he must "actually exert that assent every moment," from the time that he first gave it, until the moment that he is admitted into heaven. He may eat, drink, make bargains, study Euclid, and think of other things between; nay, sometimes sleep, and neither think of those articles, nor any thing else; and yet it be true, that he shall not be admitted into the church, or heaven, without an actual assent to them: that condition of an actual assent he has performed, and until he recall that assent by actual unbelief, it stands good: and though a lunacy, or lethargy, should seize on him presently after, and he

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should never think of it again as long as he lived, yet it is literally true, he is not saved without an actual assent. You might therefore have spared your pains, in saying, "that none of the moral virtues, none of the evangelical graces, are exerted *thus* always," until you had met with somebody who said *thus*. That I did so, I think, would have entered into nobody's thoughts but yours, it being evident from p. 156 of my book, that by actual, I meant explicit. You should rather have given a direct answer to my question, which I here again seriously ask you, viz. Whether

IX. Those you called "fundamental doctrines," in your Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, or those "Christian principles, which belong to the very essence of Christianity," so many as you have given us of them in your Socinianism unmasked, (for you may take which of your two creeds you please) are just those, neither more nor less, that are every one of them required to be believed to make a man a Christian, and such as, without the actual, or (since that word displeases you) the explicit belief whereof, he cannot be saved?

When you have answered this question, we shall then see which of us two is nearest the right: but if you shall forbear railing, which, I fear, you take for arguing, against that summary of faith, which our Saviour and his apostles taught, and which only they proposed to their hearers to be believed, to make them Christians, until you have found another perfect creed, of only necessary articles, that you dare own for such; you are like to have a large time of silence. Before I leave the passage above cited, I must desire the reader to take notice of what he says, concerning his list of fundamentals, viz. That "these his articles of faith," necessary to constitute a Christian, are such as must, *in some measure*, be known and assented to by him: a very wary expression concerning fundamentals! The question is about articles necessary to be explicitly believed to make a man

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a Christian. These, in his list, the unmasker tells us, are "necessary to constitute a Christian, and must, *in some measure*, be known and assented to." I would now fain know of the reader, Whether he understands thereby, that the unmasker means, that these his necessary articles must be explicitly believed or not? If he means an explicit knowledge and belief, why does he puzzle his reader, by so improper a way of speaking? For what is as complete and perfect as it ought to be, cannot properly be said to be "in some measure." If his "in some measure" falls short of explicitly knowing and believing his fundamentals, his necessary articles are such, as a man may be a Christian without explicitly knowing and believing, *i. e.* are no fundamentals, no necessary articles at all. Thus men, uncertain what to say, betray themselves by their great caution.

Having pronounced it folly in himself, to make up the defects of my short, and therefore so much blamed collection of fundamentals, by a full one of his own, though his attempt shows he would if he could; he goes on thus, p. 22, "From what I [the unmasker] have said, it is evident, that the vindicator is grossly mistaken, when he saith," "Whatever doctrines the apostles required to be believed to make a man a Christian, are to be found in those places of Scripture which he has quoted in his book." And a little lower, "I think I have sufficiently proved, that there are other doctrines besides that, which are required to be believed to make a man a Christian."

Answ. Whatever you have proved, or (as you never fail to do) boast you have proved, will signify nothing, until you have proved one of these propositions; and have shown either,

X. That what our Saviour and his apostles preached, and admitted men into the church for believing, is not all that is absolutely required to make a man a Christian. Or,

That the believing him to be the Messiah, was not the only article they insisted on, to those who acknowledged one God; and, upon the belief where-

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of, they admitted converts into the church, in any one of those many places quoted by me out of the history of the New Testament.

I say, any one: for though it be evident, throughout the whole Gospel and the Acts, that this was the one doctrine of faith, which, in all their preachings every where, they principally drive at: yet, if it were not so, but that in other places they taught other things, that would not prove that those other things were articles of faith, absolutely necessarily required to be believed to make a man a Christian, unless it had been so said. Because, if it appears, that ever any one was admitted into the church, by our Saviour or his apostles, without having that article explicitly laid before him, and without his explicit assent to it, you must grant, that an explicit assent to that article is not necessary to make a man a Christian: unless you will say, that our Saviour and his apostles admitted men into the church that were not qualified with such a faith as was absolutely necessary to make a man a Christian; which is as much as to say, that they allowed and pronounced men to be Christians who were not Christians. For he that wants what is necessary to make a man a Christian, can no more be a Christian, than he that wants what is necessary to make him a man, can be a man. For what is necessary to the being of any thing, is essential to its being; and any thing may be as well without its essence, as without any thing that is necessary to its being: and so a man be a man, without being a man; and a Christian a Christian, without being a Christian; and an unmasker may prove this, without proving it. You may, therefore, set up, by your unquestionable authority, what articles you please, as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian: if our Saviour and his apostles admitted converts into the church, without preaching those your articles to them, or requiring an explicit assent to what they did not preach and explicitly lay down, I shall prefer their authority to yours, and think it was rather by them, than by you, that God promulgated the

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law of faith, and manifested what that faith was, upon which he would receive penitent converts.

And though, by his apostles, our Saviour taught a great many other truths, for the explaining this fundamental article of the law of faith, that Jesus is the Messiah; some whereof have a nearer, and some a more remote connexion with it, and so cannot be denied by any Christian, who sees that connexion, or knows they are so taught: yet an explicit belief of any one of them is no more necessarily required to make a man a Christian, than an explicit belief of all those truths, which have a connexion with the being of a God, or are revealed by him, is necessarily required to make a man not to be an atheist: though none of them can be denied by any one who sees that connexion, or acknowledges that revelation, without his being an atheist. All these truths, taught us from God, either by reason or revelation, are of great use, to enlighten our minds, confirm our faith, stir up our affections, &c. And the more we see of them, the more we shall see, admire, and magnify the wisdom, goodness, mercy, and love of God, in the work of our redemption. This will oblige us to search and study the Scripture, wherein it is contained and laid open to us.

All that we find, in the revelation of the New Testament, being the declared will and mind of our Lord and Master, the Messiah, whom we have taken to be our king, we are bound to receive as right and truth, or else we are not his subjects, we do not believe him to be the Messiah, our King, but cast him off, and with the Jews say, "We will not have this man reign over us." But it is still what we find in the Scripture not in this or that system; what we, sincerely seeking to know the will of our Lord, discover to be his mind. Where it is spoken plainly, we cannot miss it; and it is evident he requires our assent: where there is obscurity, either in the expressions themselves, or by reason of the seeming contrariety of other passages, there a fair endeavour, as much as our circumstances will permit, secures us from a guilty disobedience of his will, or a

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sinful error in faith, which way soever our inquiry resolves the doubt, or perhaps leaves it unresolved. If he had required more of us in those points, he would have declared his will plainer to us, and discovered the truth contained in those obscure, or seemingly contradictory places, as clearly and as uniformly as he did that fundamental article, that we were to believe him to be the Messiah, our King.

As men, we have God for our King, and are under the law of reason: as Christians, we have Jesus the Messiah for our King, and are under the law revealed by him in the Gospel. And though every Christian, both as a Deist and a Christian, be obliged to study both the law of nature and the revealed law, that in them he may know the will of God, and of Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent; yet in neither of these laws is there to be found a select set of fundamentals, distinct from the rest, which are to make him a Deist, or a Christian. But he that believes one eternal, invisible God, his Lord and King, ceases thereby to be an atheist; and he that believes Jesus to be the Messiah, his King, ordained by God, thereby becomes a Christian, is delivered from the power of darkness, and is translated into the kingdom of the Son of God; is actually within the covenant of grace, and has that faith, which shall be imputed to him for righteousness; and, if he continues in his allegiance to this his King, shall receive the reward, eternal life.

He that considers this, will not be so hot as the unmasker, to contend for a number of fundamental articles, all necessary, every one of them, to be explicitly believed by every one for salvation, without knowing them himself, or being able to enumerate them to another. Can there be any thing more absurd than to say, there are several fundamental articles, each of which every man must explicitly believe, upon pain of damnation, and yet not be able to say which they be? The unmasker has set down no small number; but yet dares not say, these are all. On the contrary, he has plainly confessed there are more; but will not, *i. e.* cannot tell what they are, that remain behind: Nay, has given a general description of his fundamental articles, by which

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it is not evident, but there may be ten times as many as those he had named; and amongst them (if he durst, or could name them) probably several, that many a good Christian, who died in the faith, and is now in heaven, never once thought of; and others, which many, of as good authority as he, would, from their different systems, certainly deny and contradict.

This, as great an absurdity as it is, cannot be otherwise, whilst men will take upon them to alter the terms of the Gospel; and when it is evident, that our Saviour and his apostles received men into the church, and pronounced them believers, for taking him to be the Messiah, their King and deliverer, sent by God, have a boldness to say, "this is not enough." But when you would know of them what then is enough, they cannot tell you: the reason whereof is visible, viz. because they being able to produce no other reason for their collection of fundamental articles, to prove them necessary to be believed, but because they are of divine authority, and contained in the holy Scriptures; and are, as the unmasker says, "writ there on purpose to be believed;" they know not where to stop, when they have once begun: those texts that they leave out, or from which they deduce none of their fundamentals, being of the same divine authority, and so upon that account equally fundamental with what they culled out, though not so well suited to their particular systems.

Hence come those endless and unreasonable contentions about fundamentals, whilst each censures the defect, redundancy, or falsehood of what others require, as necessary to be believed: and yet he himself gives not a catalogue of his own fundamentals, which he will say is sufficient and complete. Nor is it to be wondered; since, in this way, it is impossible to stop short of putting every proposition, divinely revealed, into the list of fundamentals; all of them being of divine, and so of equal authority; and, upon that account, equally necessary to be believed by every one that is a Christian, though they are not all necessary to be believed to make any one a Christian. For the New Testament containing the laws of the Messiah's kingdom, in regard of all

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the actions, both of mind and body, of all his subjects; every Christian is bound, by his allegiance to him, to believe all that he says in it to be true; as well as to assent, that all he commands in it is just and good: and what negligence, perverseness, or guilt there is, in his mistaking in the one, or failing in his obedience to the other, that this righteous Judge of all men, who cannot be deceived, will at the last day lay open, and reward accordingly.

It is no wonder, therefore, there have been such fierce contests, and such cruel havoc made amongst Christians about fundamentals; whilst every one would set up his system, upon pain of fire and faggot in this, and hell-fire in the other world. Though, at the same time, whilst he is exercising the utmost barbarities against others, to prove himself a true Christian, he professes himself so ignorant that he cannot tell, or so uncharitable that he will not tell, what articles are absolutely necessary and sufficient to make a man a Christian. If there be any such fundamentals, as it is certain there are, it is as certain they must be very plain. Why then does every one urge and make a stir about fundamentals, and nobody give a list of them? But because (as I have said) upon the usual grounds, they cannot: for I will be bold to say, that every one who considers the matter, will see, that either only the article of his being the Messiah their King, which alone our Saviour and his apostles preached to the unconverted world, and received those that believed it into the church, is the only necessary article to be believed by a theist, to make him a Christian; or else, that all the truths contained in the New Testament are necessary articles to be believed to make a man a Christian: and that between these two, it is impossible any where to stand; the reason whereof is plain. Because, either the believing Jesus to be the Messiah, *i. e.* the taking him to be our King, makes us subjects and denizens of his kingdom, that is, Christians: or else an explicit knowledge of, and actual obedience to, the laws of his kingdom, is what is required to make us subjects; which, I think, it was never said of any other kingdom. For a man must be a subject, before he is bound to obey.

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Let us suppose it will be said here, that an obedience to the laws of Christ's kingdom is what is necessary to make us subjects of it, without which we cannot be admitted into it, *i. e.* be Christians: and, if so, this obedience must be universal; I mean, it must be the same sort of obedience to all the laws of this kingdom: which, since nobody says is in any one such as is wholly free from error, or frailty, this obedience can only lie in a sincere disposition and purpose of mind, to obey every one of the laws of the Messiah, delivered in the New Testament, to the utmost of our power. Now, believing right being one part of that obedience, as well as acting right is the other part, the obedience of assent must be implicitly to all that is delivered there, that it is true. But for as much as the particular acts of an explicit assent cannot go any farther than his understanding, who is to assent; what he understands to be truth, delivered by our Saviour, or the apostles commissioned by him, and assisted by his Spirit, that he must necessarily believe: it becomes a fundamental article to him, and he cannot refuse his assent to it, without renouncing his allegiance. For he that denies any of the doctrines that Christ has delivered, to be true, denies him to be sent from God, and consequently to be the Messiah; and so ceases to be a Christian. From whence it is evident, that if any more be necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, than the believing Jesus to be the Messiah, and thereby taking him for our King, it cannot be any set bundle of fundamentals, culled out of the Scripture, with an omission of the rest, according as best suits any one's fancy, system, or interest: but it must be an explicit belief of all those propositions, which he, according to the best of his understanding, really apprehends to be contained and meant in the Scripture; and an implicit belief of all the rest, which he is ready to believe, as soon as it shall please God, upon his use of the means, to enlighten him, and make them clear to his understanding. So that, in effect, almost every particular man in this sense has, or may have, a distinct catalogue of fundamentals, each whereof it is necessary for him explicitly to believe, now that he is a Christian; where-

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of, if he should disbelieve, or deny any one, he would cast off his allegiance, disfranchise himself, and be no longer a subject of Christ's kingdom. But, in this sense, nobody can tell what is fundamental to another, what is necessary for another man to believe. This catalogue of fundamentals, every one alone can make for himself: nobody can fix it for him; nobody can collect or prescribe it to another: but this is, according as God has dealt to every one the measure of light and faith; and has opened each man's understanding, that he may understand the Scriptures. Whoever has used what means he is capable of, for the informing of himself, with a readiness to believe and obey what shall be taught and prescribed by Jesus, his Lord and King, is a true and faithful subject of Christ's kingdom; and cannot be thought to fail in any thing necessary to salvation.

Supposing a man and his wife, barely by seeing the wonderful things that Moses did, should have been persuaded to put themselves under his government; or by reading his law, and liking it; or by any other motive, had been prevailed on sincerely to take him for their ruler and lawgiver; and accordingly (renouncing their former idolatry and heathenish pollutions) in token thereof had, by baptism and circumcision, the initiating ceremonies, solemnly entered themselves into that communion, under the law of Moses; had they not thereby been made denizens of the commonwealth of Israel, and invested with all the privileges and prerogatives of true children of Abraham, leaving to their posterity a right to their share in the promised land, though they had died before they had performed any other act of obedience to that law; nay, though they had not known whose son Moses was, nor how he had delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, nor whither he was leading them? I do not say, it is likely they should be so far ignorant. But, whether they were or no, it was enough that they took him for their prince and ruler, with a purpose to obey him, to submit themselves entirely to his commands and conduct; and did nothing afterwards, whereby they disowned or rejected his authority over them. In that respect, none of his laws

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were greater or more necessary to be submitted to, one than another, though the matter of one might be of much greater consequence than of another. But a disobedience to any law of the least consequence, if it carry with it a disowning of the authority that made it, forfeits all, and cuts off such an offender from that commonwealth, and all the privileges of it.

This is the case, in respect of other matters of faith, to those who believe Jesus to be the Messiah, and take him to be their King, sent from God, and so are already Christians. It is not the opinion, that any one may have of the weightiness of the matter, (if they are, without their own fault, ignorant that our Saviour hath revealed it) that shall disfranchise them, and make them forfeit their interest in his kingdom: they may still be good subjects, though they do not believe a great many things, which creed-makers may think necessary to be believed. That which is required of them, is a sincere endeavour to know his mind, declared in the Gospel, and an explicit belief of all that they understand to be so. Not to believe what he has revealed, whether in a lighter or more weighty matter, calls his veracity into question, destroys his mission, denies his authority, and is a flat disowning him to be the Messiah, and so overturns that fundamental and necessary article whereby a man is a Christian. But this cannot be done by a man's ignorance, or unwilful mistake of any of the truths published by our Saviour himself, or his authorized and inspired ministers, in the New Testament. Whilst a man knows not that it was his will or meaning, his allegiance is safe, though he believe the contrary.

If this were not so, it is impossible that any one should be a Christian. For in some things we are ignorant, and err all, not knowing the Scriptures. For the holy inspired writings, being all of the same divine authority, must all equally in every article be fundamental, and necessary to be believed; if that be a reason, that makes any one proposition in it necessary to be believed. But the law of faith, the covenant of the Gospel, being a covenant of grace, and not of natural right, or debt; nothing can be absolutely necessary to be believed, but

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what, by this new law of faith, God of his good pleasure hath made to be so. And this, it is plain, by the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, to all that believed not already in him, was only the believing the only true God, and Jesus to be the Messiah, whom he hath sent. The performance of this puts a man within the covenant, and is that which God will impute to him for righteousness. All the other acts of assent to other truths, taught by our Saviour and his apostles, are not what make a man a Christian; but are necessary acts of obedience to be performed by one who is a Christian; and therefore, being a Christian, ought to live by the laws of Christ's kingdom.

Nor are we without some glimpse of light, why it hath pleased God of his grace, that the believing Jesus to be the Messiah should be that faith which he would impute to men for righteousness. It is evident from Scripture, that our Saviour despised the shame and endured the cross for the joy set before him; which joy, it is also plain, was a kingdom. But, in this kingdom, which his Father had appointed to him, he could have none but voluntary subjects; such as leaving the kingdom of darkness, and of the prince of this world, with all the pleasures, pomps, and vanities thereof, would put themselves under his dominion, and translate themselves into his kingdom; which they did, by believing and owning him to be the Messiah their King, and thereby taking him to rule over them. For the faith for which God justifieth, is not an empty speculation, but a faith joined with repentance, and working by love. And for this, which was, in effect, to return to God himself, and to their natural allegiance due to him, and to advance, as much as lay in them, the glory of the kingdom, which he had promised his Son; God was pleased to declare, he would accept them, receive them to grace, and blot out all their former transgressions.

This is evidently the covenant of grace, as delivered in the Scriptures: and if this be not, I desire any one to tell me what it is, and what are the terms of it. It is a law of faith, whereby God has promised to forgive all

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our sins, upon our repentance and believing something; and to impute that faith to us for righteousness. Now I ask, what it is by the law of faith, we are required to believe? For until that be known, the law of faith is not distinctly known; nor the terms of the covenant, upon which the all-merciful God graciously offers us salvation. And if any one will say, this is not known, nay, is not easily and certainly to be known under the Gospel, I desire him to tell me, what the greatest enemies of Christianity can say worse against it? For a way proposed to salvation, that does not certainly lead thither, or is proposed so as not to be known, are very little different as to their consequence; and mankind would be left to wander in darkness and uncertainty with the one as well as the other.

I do not write this for controversy's sake; for had I minded victory, I would not have given the unmasker this new matter of exception. I know whatever is said, he must be bawling for his fashionable and profitable orthodoxy, and cry out against this too, which I have here added, as Socinianism; and cast that name upon all that differs from what is held by those he would recommend his zeal to in writing. I call it bawling, for whether what he has said be reasoning, I shall refer to those of his own brotherhood, if he be of any brotherhood, and there be any that will join with him in his set of fundamentals, when his creed is made.

Had I minded nothing but how to deal with him, I had tied him up short to his list of fundamentals, without affording him topics of declaiming against what I have here said. But I have enlarged on this point, for the sake of such readers, who, with the love of truth, read books of this kind, and endeavour to inform themselves in the things of their everlasting concernment: it being of greater consideration with me to give any light and satisfaction to one single person, who is really concerned to understand, and be convinced of the religion he professes, than what a thousand fashionable or titular professors of any sort of orthodoxy shall say, or think of me, for not doing as they do; *i. e.* for not

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saying after others, without understanding what is said, or upon what grounds, or caring to understand it.

Let us now consider his argument, to prove the articles he has given us to be fundamentals. In his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, p. 119, he argues from 1 Tim. iii. 16, where he says, "Christianity is called a mystery; that all things in Christianity are not plain, and exactly level to every common apprehension; and that every thing in Christianity is not clear, and intelligible and comprehensible by the weakest noddle." Let us take this for proved, as much as he pleases; and then let us see the force of this subtile disputant's argument, for the necessity there is, that every Christian man should believe those, which he has given us for fundamental articles, out of the epistles. The reason of that obligation, and the necessity of every man's and woman's believing in them, he has laid in this, that they are to be found in the epistles, or in the Bible. This argument for them we have over and over again, in his Socinianism unmasked, as here, p. 9, thus: "Are they set down to no purpose, in these inspired epistles? Why did the apostles write these doctrines, was it not, that those they writ to, might give their assent to them?" p. 22. "They are in our Bibles, for that very purpose, to be believed," p. 25. Now I ask, Can any one more directly invalidate all he says here, for the necessity of believing his articles? Can any one more apparently write booty, than by saying, that "these his doctrines, these his fundamental articles" (which are, after his fashion, set down between the 8th and 20th pages of this his first chapter) are of necessity to be believed by every one, before he can be a Christian, because they are in the epistles and in the Bible; and yet affirm, that in Christianity, *i. e.* in the epistles and in the Bible, there are mysteries, there are things "not plain, not clear, not intelligible to common apprehensions?" If his articles, some of which contain mysteries, are necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, because they are in the Bible; then, according to this rule, it is necessary for many men to believe

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what is not intelligible to them; what their noddles cannot apprehend, (as the unmasker is pleased to turn the supposition of vulgar people's understanding the fundamentals of their religion into ridicule) *i. e.* it is necessary for many men to do, what is impossible for them to do, before they can be Christians. But if there be several things in the Bible, and in the epistles, that are not necessary for men to believe, to make them Christians; then all the unmasker's arguments, upon their being in the epistles, are no proofs, that all his articles are necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, because they are set down in the epistles: much less, because he thinks they may be drawn, according to his system, out of what is set down in the epistles. Let him therefore, either confess these and the like questions, "Why did the apostles write these? Was it not, that those they writ to might give their assent to them? Why should not every one of these evangelical truths be believed and embraced? They are in our Bibles, for that very purpose," and the like, to be impertinent and ridiculous. Let him cease to propose them with so much ostentation, for they can serve only to mislead unwary readers: or let him unsay what he has said, of things "not plain to common apprehensions, not clear and intelligible." Let him recant what he has said of mysteries in Christianity. For I ask with him, p. 8, "where can we be informed, but in the sacred and inspired writings?" It is ridiculous to urge that any thing is necessary to be explicitly believed, to make a man a Christian, because it is writ in the epistles, and in the Bible; unless he confess that there is no mystery, nothing not plain, or unintelligible to vulgar understandings, in the epistles, or in the Bible.

This is so evident, that the unmasker himself, who, p. 119 of his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, thought it ridiculous to suppose, that the vulgar should understand Christianity, is here of another mind: and, p. 30, says of his evangelical doctrines and articles, necessary to be assented to, that they are intelligible and plain; there is no "ambiguity and doubtful-

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ness in them; they shine with their own light, and to an unprejudiced eye are plain, evident, and illustrious"

To draw the unmasker out of the clouds, and prevent his hiding himself in the doubtfulness of his expressions, I shall desire him to say directly, whether the articles, which are necessary to be believed, to make a man a Christian, and particularly those he has set down for such, are all plain and intelligible, and such as may be understood and comprehended (I will not say in the unmasker's ridiculous way, by the weakest noddles, but) by every illiterate country man and woman, capable of church communion?

If he says, Yes; then all mysteries are excluded out of his articles necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian. For that which can be comprehended by every day-labourer, every poor spinster, that is a member of the church, cannot be a mystery. And, if what such illiterate people cannot understand be required to be believed to make them Christians, the greatest part of mankind are shut out from being Christians.

But the unmasker has provided an answer, in these words, p. 31, "There is," says he, "a difficulty in the doctrine of the Trinity, and several truths of the Gospel, as to the exact manner of the things themselves, which we shall never be able to comprehend, at least on this side of heaven: but there is no difficulty as to the reality and certainty of them, because we know they are revealed to us by God in the holy Scriptures."

Which answer of "difficulty in the manner," and "no difficulty in the reality," having the appearance of a distinction, looks like learning; but when it comes to be applied to the case in hand, will scarce afford us sense.

The question is about a proposition to be believed, which must first necessarily be understood. For a man cannot possibly give his assent to any affirmation or negation, unless he understand the terms as they are joined in that proposition, and has a conception of the thing affirmed or denied, and also a conception of the thing, concerning which it is affirmed or denied, as they are

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there put together. But let the proposition be what it will, there is no more to be understood, than is expressed in the terms of that proposition. If it be a proposition concerning a matter of fact, it is enough to conceive, and believe the matter of fact. If it be a proposition concerning the manner of the fact, the manner of the fact must also be believed, as it is intelligibly expressed in that proposition; *v. g.* should this proposition νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται be offered as an article of faith to an illiterate countryman of England, he could not believe it: because, though a true proposition, yet it being proposed in words whose meaning he understood not, he could not give any assent to it. Put it into English, he understands what is meant by the "dead shall rise." For he can conceive, that the same man, who was dead and senseless, should be alive again; as well as he can, that the same man, who is now in a lethargy, should awake again; or the same man that is now out of his sight, and he knows not whether he be alive or dead, should return and be with him again: and so he is capable of believing it, though he conceives nothing of the manner how a man revives, wakes, or moves. But none of these manners of those actions being included in those propositions, the proposition concerning the matter of fact (if it imply no contradiction in it) may be believed; and so all that is required may be done, whatever difficulty may be, as to the exact manner, how it is brought about.

But where the proposition is about the manner, the belief too must be of the manner, *v. g.* the article is, "The dead shall be raised with spiritual bodies:" and then the belief must be as well of this manner of the fact, as of the fact itself. So that what is said here, by the unmasker, about the manner, signifies nothing at all in the case. What is understood to be expressed in each proposition, whether it be of the manner, or not of the manner, is (by its being a revelation from God) to be believed as far as it is understood: but no more is required to be believed concerning any article, than is contained in that article.

What the unmasker, for the removing of difficulties,

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adds farther, in these words, "But there is no difficulty as to the reality and certainty of the truths of the Gospel; because we know, they are revealed to us by God in the holy Scripture;" is yet farther from signifying any thing to the purpose than the former. The question is about understanding, and in what sense they are understood; not believing several propositions or articles of faith which are to be found in the Scripture. To this the unmasker says, there can be "no difficulty at all as to their reality and certainty; because they are revealed by God." Which amounts to no more but this, that there is no difficulty at all in the understanding and believing this proposition, "that whatever is revealed by God, is really and certainly true." But is the understanding and believing this single proposition, the understanding and believing all the articles of faith necessary to be believed? Is this all the explicit faith a Christian need have? If so, then a Christian need explicitly believe no more but this one proposition, viz. That all the propositions between the two covers of his Bible are certainly true. But I imagine the unmasker will not think the believing this one proposition is a sufficient belief of all those fundamental articles, which he has given us, as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian. For, if that will serve the turn, I conclude he may make his set of fundamentals as large and express to his system as he pleases: Calvinists, Arminians, Anabaptists, Socinians, will all thus own the belief of them, viz. that all that God has revealed in the Scripture is really and certainly true.

But if believing this proposition, that all that is revealed by God in the Scripture is true, be not all the faith which the unmasker requires, what he says about the reality and certainty of all truths revealed by God removes nothing of the difficulty. A proposition of divine authority is found in the Scripture: it is agreed presently between him and me, that it contains a real, certain truth: but the difficulty is, what is the truth it contains, to which he and I must assent; *v. g.* the profession of faith made by the eunuch, in these words, "Jesus Christ is the Son of God," upon which he was

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admitted into the church, as a Christian, I believe, contains a "real and certain truth." Is that enough? No, says the unmasker, p. 87, it "includes in it, that Christ was God;" and therefore it is not enough for me to believe that these words contain a real certain truth: but I must believe they contain this truth, that Jesus Christ is God; that the eunuch spoke them in that sense, and in that sense I must assent to them: whereas they appear to me to be spoken, and meant here, as well as in several other places of the New Testament, in this sense, viz. "That Jesus Christ is the Messiah," and in that sense, in this place, I assent to them. The meaning then of these words, as spoken by the eunuch, is the difficulty: and I desire the unmasker, by the application of what he has said here, to remove that difficulty. For granting all revelation from God to be really and certainly true, (as certainly it is) how does the believing that general truth remove any difficulty about the sense and interpretation of any particular proposition, found in any passage of the holy Scriptures? Or is it possible for any man to understand it in one sense, and believe it in another; because it is a divine revelation, that has reality and certainty in it? Thus much, as to what the unmasker says of the fundamentals he has given us, p. 30, viz. That "no true lover of God and truth need doubt of any of them: for there is no ambiguity and doubtfulness in them." If the distinction he has used, "of difficulty as to the exact manner, and no difficulty as to the reality and certainty of Gospel-truths," will remove all ambiguity and doubtfulness from all those texts of Scripture, from whence he and others deduce fundamental articles, so that they will be "plain and intelligible" to every man, in the sense he understands them; he has done great service to Christianity.

But he seems to distrust that himself, in the following words: "They shine," says he, "with their own light, and, to an unprejudiced eye, are plain, evident, and illustrious; and they would always continue so, if some ill-minded men did not perplex and entangle them." I see the matter would go very smooth, if

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the unmasker might be the sole, authentic interpreter of Scripture. He is wisely of that judge's mind, who was against hearing the counsel on the other side, because they always perplexed the cause.

But if those who differ from the unmasker shall in their turns call him the "prejudiced and ill-minded man," who perplexes these matters (as they may, with as much authority as he) we are but where we were; each must understand for himself, the best he can, until the unmasker be received as the only unprejudiced man, to whose dictates every one, without examination, is with an implicit faith to submit.

Here again, p. 32, the unmasker puts upon me what I never said: and therefore I must desire him to show, where it is that I pretend,

XI. That this "proposition," that Jesus is the Messiah, "is more intelligible than any of those he has named."

In his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, p. 120, he argues, that this proposition [Jesus is the Messiah] has more difficulty in it than the article of the holy Trinity. And his proofs are worthy of an unmasker. "For," says he, "here is an Hebrew word first to be explained;" or (as he has this strong argument again, Socinianism unmasked, p. 32,) "Here first the name Jesus, which is of Hebrew extraction, though since Grecized, must be expounded."

Answ. Jesus being a proper name, only denoting a certain person, needs not to be expounded, of what extraction soever it be. Is this proposition, Jonathan was the son of Saul, king of Israel, any thing the harder, because the three proper names in it, Jonathan, Saul, and Israel, are of Hebrew extraction? And is it not as easy, and as "level to the understanding of the vulgar," as this, Arthur was the son of Henry, king of England; though neither of these names be of Hebrew extraction? Or cannot any vulgar capacity understand this proposition, "John Edwards writ a book, entitled," Socinianism unmasked; until the name of John, which is of Hebrew extraction, be explained to him? If this be so, parents were best beware, how hereafter they

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give their children Scripture-names, if they cannot understand what they say to one another about them, until these names of Hebrew extraction are expounded to them; and every proposition, that is in writings and contracts, made concerning persons, that have names of Hebrew extraction, become thereby as hard to be understood as the doctrine of the holy Trinity.

His next argument is just of the same size. The word Messias must, he says, be explained too. Of what extraction soever it be, there needs no more explication of it than what our English Bible gives of it, where it is plain to any vulgar capacity, that it was used to denote that King and Deliverer, whom God had promised. So that this proposition, "Jesus is the Messiah," has no more difficulty in it than this, Jesus is the promised King and Deliverer; or than this, Cyrus was king and deliverer of Persia; which, I think, requires not much depth of Hebrew to be understood. He that understood this proposition, and took Cyrus for his king, was a subject, and a member of his kingdom; and he that understands the other, and takes Jesus to be his King, is his subject, and a member of his kingdom. But if this be as hard as it is to some men to understand the doctrine of the Trinity, I fear many of the kings in the world have but few true subjects. To believe Jesus to be the Messiah, is (as he has been told, over and over again) to take him for our King and Ruler, promised, and sent by God. This is that which will make any one from a Jew or Heathen, to be a Christian. In this sense it is very intelligible to vulgar capacities. Those who so understand and believe it, are so far from "pronouncing these words as a spell," (as the unmasker ridiculously suggests, p. 33,) that they thereby become Christians.

But what if I tell the unmasker, that there is one Mr. Edwards, who (when he speaks his mind without considering how it will make for or against him) in another place, thinks this proposition, "Jesus is the Messias," very easy and intelligible? To convince him of it, I shall desire him to turn to the 74th page of his Socinianism unmasked, where he will find, that Mr. Edwards, without any great search into Hebrew extractions, interprets "Jesus the Messiah" to signify

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this, " That Jesus of Nazareth was that eminent and extraordinary person prophesied of long before, and that he was sent and commissioned by God:" which, I think, is no very hard proposition to be understood. But it is no strange thing, that that which was very easy to an unmasker in one place, should be terribly hard in another, where want of something better requires to have it so.

Another argument that he uses to prove the articles he has given us to be necessary to salvation, p. 22, is, because they are doctrines which contain things that in their nature have an " immediate respect to the occasion, author, way, end, means, and issue of men's redemption and salvation." And here I desire him to prove,

XII. That every one of his articles contains things so immediately relating to the " occasion, author, way, means, and issue of our redemption and salvation, that nobody can be saved, without understanding the texts from whence he draws them in the very same sense that he does; and explicitly believing all these propositions that he has deduced, and all that he will deduce from Scripture, when he shall please to complete his creed."

Page 23, he says of his fundamentals, " Not without good reason, *therefore*, I called them essential and integral parts of our Christian and evangelical faith: and why the Vindicator fleers at these terms I know no reason, but that he cannot confute the application of them."

Answ. One would think by the word *therefore*, which he uses here, that in the preceding paragraph he had produced some reason to justify his ridiculous use of those terms, in his Thoughts concerning Atheism, p. 111. But nothing therein will be found tending to it. Indeed, the foregoing paragraph begins with these words, " Thus I have briefly set before the reader those evangelical truths, those Christian principles, which belong

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to the very essence of Christianity." Amongst these, there is the word Essence: but that from thence, or any thing else in that paragraph, the unmasker could, with good sense, or any sense at all, infer, as he does, "not without good reason, *therefore* I called them the *essential* and *integral* parts of our Christian and evangelical faith," requires an extraordinary sort of logic to make out. What, I beseech you, is your good reason too, here, upon which you infer "Therefore," &c.? For it is impossible for any one but an unmasker to find one word justifying his use of the terms essential and integral. But it would be a great restraint to the running of the unmasker's pen, if you should not allow him the free use of illative particles, where there are no premises to support them: and if you should not take affirmations without proof for reasoning, you at once strike off above three quarters of his book; and he will often, for several pages together, have nothing to say. As, for example, from p. 28 to p. 35.

But to show that I did not without reason say, his use of the terms essential and integral, in the place before quoted, was ridiculous; I must mind my reader, that, p. 109 of his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, he having said, that "the epistolary writings are fraught with other fundamentals, besides that one which I mention;" and then having set them down, he closes his catalogue of them thus: "These are matters of faith contained in the epistles, and they are essential and integral parts of the Gospel itself," p. 111. Now what could be more ridiculous, than, where the question is about fundamental doctrines, which are essentials of the Christian religion, without an assent to which a man cannot be a Christian; and so he himself calls them, p. 21 of his Socinianism unmasked; that he should close the list he had made of fundamental doctrines, *i. e.* essential points of the Christian religion, with telling his reader, "These are essential and integral parts of the Gospel itself? *i. e.* These, which I have given you for fundamental, for essential doctrines of the Gospel, are the fundamental and not fundamental, essential and not essential parts

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of the Gospel mixed together. For integral parts, in all the writers I have met with, besides the unmasker, are contradistinguished to essential; and signify such parts as the thing can be without, but without them will not be so complete and entire as with them. Just such an acuteness as our unmasker would any one show, who taking upon him to set down the parts essential to a man, without the having of which he could not be a man, should name the soul, the head, the heart, lungs, stomach, liver, spleen, eyes, ears, tongue, arms, legs, hair, and nails; and, to make all sure, should conclude with these words; "These are parts contained" in a man, "and are essential and integral parts of a man himself;" *i. e.* They are parts, without some of which he cannot be a man; and others, which though they make the man entire, yet he may be a man without them; as a man ceases not to be a man, though he wants a nail, a finger, or an arm, which are integral parts of a man, *Risum teneatis?* If the unmasker can make any better sense of his "essential and integral parts of the Gospel itself," I will ask his pardon for my laughing: until then he must not be angry, if the reader and I laugh too. Besides, I must tell him, that those which he has set down, are not the "integral parts of the Christian faith," any more than the head, the trunk, and the arms, hands, and thighs are the integral parts of a man: for a man is not entire without the legs and feet too. They are some of the integral parts indeed; but cannot be called the integral parts, where any, that go to make up the whole man, are left out; nor those the integral, but some of the integral parts of the Christian faith, out of which any of the doctrines, proposed in the New Testament, are omitted: for whatever is there proposed, is proposed to be believed, and so is a part of the Christian faith.

Before I leave his catalogue of the "essential and integral parts" of the Gospel, which he has given us, instead of one, containing the articles necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, I must take notice of what he says, whilst he is making it, p. 9. "Why then is there a treatise published, to tell the world

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that the bare belief of a Messiah is all that is required of a Christian?" As if there were no difference between believing a Messiah, and believing Jesus to be the Messiah; no difference between "required of a Christian," and required to make a man a Christian. As if you should say, renouncing his former idolatry, and being circumcised and baptized into Moses, was all that was required to make a man an Israelite; therefore it was all that was required of an Israelite. For these two falsehoods has he, in this one short sentence, thought fit slily to father upon me, the "humble imitator of the "Jesuits," as he is pleased to call me. And, therefore, I must desire him to show,

XIII. Where the "world is told, in the treatise that I published, That the bare belief of a Messiah is all that is required of a Christian?"

The six next pages, *i. e.* from the twenty-eighth to the end of his second chapter, being taken up with nothing but pulpit oratory, out of its place; and without any reply, applied, or applicable to any thing I have said in my Vindication; I shall pass by, until he shows any thing in them that is so.

In page 36, this giant in argument falls on me, and mauls me unmercifully about the epistles. He begins thus: "The gentleman is not without his evasions, and he sees it is high time to make use of them. This puts him in some disorder. For, when he comes to speak of my mentioning his ill treatment of the epistles,—you may observe that he begins to grow warmer than before. Now this meek man is nettled, and one may perceive he is sensible of the scandal that he hath given to good people, by his slighting the epistolary writings of the holy apostles; yet he is so cunning as to disguise his passion as well as he can." Let all this impertinent and inconsistent stuff be so. I am angry and cannot disguise it, I am cunning and would disguise it, but yet the quick-sighted unmasker has found me out, that I am nettled. What does all this notable prologue of *hictius doctius*, of a cunning man, and in

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effect "no cunning man, in disorder, warmed, nettled, in a passion," tend to? but to show that these following words of mine, p. 170 of my Vindication, viz. "I require you to publish to the world those passages which show my contempt of the epistles," are so full of heat and disorder, that they need no other answer: "But what need I, good sir, do this, when you have done it yourself?" A reply, I own, very soft; and whether I may not say very silly, let the reader judge. The unmasker having accused me of contemning the epistles, my reply, in my Vindication, ibid. was thus: "Sir, when your angry fit is over, and the abatement of your passion has given way to the return of your sincerity, I shall beg you to read this passage in the 154th page of my book: These holy writers (viz. the penmen of the epistles) inspired from above, writ nothing but truth; and in most places very weighty truths to us now, for the expounding, clearing, and confirming of the Christian doctrine, and establishing those in it who had embraced it." And again, p. 156, "The other parts [*i. e.* besides the Gospels and the Acts] of *divine revelation* are objects of faith, and are so to be received; they are truths, of which none that is once known to be such, *i. e.* revealed, may, or ought to be disbelieved. And if this does not satisfy you, that I have as high a veneration for the epistles as you, or any one can have, I require you to publish to the world those *passages* which show my contempt of them." After such direct words of mine, expressing my veneration for that part of divine revelation which is contained in the epistles, any one, but an unmasker, would blush to charge me with contempt of them; without alleging, when summoned to it, any word in my book to justify that charge.

If hardness of forehead were strength of brains, it were two to one of his side against any man I ever yet heard of. I require him to publish to the world those passages that show my contempt of the epistles; and he answers me, "He need not do it, for I have done it myself." Whoever had common sense, would understand, that what I demanded was, that he should

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show the world where, amongst all I had published, there were any passages that expressed contempt of the epistles: for it was not expected he should quote passages of mine that I had never published. And this acute unmasker (to this) says, I had published them myself. So that the reason why he cannot find them is, because I had published them myself. But, says he, ".I appeal to the reader, whether (after your tedious collection out of the four evangelists) your passing by the epistles, and neglecting wholly what the apostles say in them," be not publishing to the " world your contempt of them?" I demand of him to publish to the world those passages which show my contempt of the epistles: and he answers, " He need not, I have done it myself." How does that appear? I have passed by the epistles, says he. My passing them by then, are passages published against the epistles? For " publishing of passages" is what you said you " need not do," and what " I had done." So that the passages I have published containing a contempt of the epistles, are extant in my saying nothing of them? Surely this same passing by has done some very shrewd displeasure to our poor unmasker, that he so starts whenever it is but named, and cannot think it contains less than exclusion, defiance, and contempt. Here therefore the proposition remaining to be proved by you is,

XIV. " That one cannot pass by any thing, without contempt of it."

And when you have proved it, I shall then ask you, what will become of all those parts of Scripture, all those chapters and verses, that you have passed by, in your collection of fundamental articles? Those that you have vouchsafed to set down, you tell us, " are in the Bible on purpose to be believed." What must become of all the rest, which you have omitted? Are they there not to be believed? And must the reader understand your passing them by to be a publishing to the world your contempt of them? If so, you have unmasked

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yourself: If not, but you may pass by some parts of Scripture, nay, whole epistles, as you have those of St. James and St. Jude, without contempt; why may not I, without contempt, pass by others; but because you have a liberty to do what you will, and I must do but what you, in your good pleasure, will allow me? But if I ask you, whence you have this privilege above others; you will have nothing to say, except it be, according to your usual skill in divining, that you know my heart, and the thoughts that are in it, which you find not like yours, right orthodox, and good; but always evil and perverse, such as I dare not own, but hypocritically either say nothing of or declare against: but yet, with all my cunning, I cannot hide them from you; your all-knowing penetration always finds them out: you know them, or you guess at them, as is best for your turn, and that is as good: and then presently I am confounded. I doubt, whether the world has ever had any two-eyed man your equal, for penetration and a quick sight. The telling, by the spectator's looks, what card he guesses, is nothing to what you can do. You take the height of an author's parts, by numbering the pages of his book; you can spy an heresy in him, by his saying not a syllable of it; distinguish him from the orthodox, by his understanding places of Scripture just as several of the orthodox do; you can repeat by heart whole leaves of what is in his mind to say, before he speaks a word of it; you can discover designs before they are hatched, and all the intrigues of carrying them on, by those who never thought of them. All this and more you can do, by the spirit of orthodoxy; or, which is as certain, by your own good spirit of invention informing you. Is not this to be an errant conjurer?

But to your reply. You say, "After my *tedious* collection out of the four evangelists, my passing by the epistles, and neglecting wholly what the apostles say," &c. I wondered at first why you mentioned not the Acts here, as well as the four evangelists: for I have not, as you have in other places observed, been sparing of collections out of the Acts too. But there was, it seems, a necessity here for your omitting it: for that

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would have stood too near what followed, in these words: and "neglecting wholly what the apostles say." For if it appeared to the reader, out of your own confession, that I allowed and built upon the divine authority of what the apostles say in the Acts, he could not so easily be misled into an opinion, that I contemned what they say in their epistles. But this is but a slight touch of your legerdemain.

And now I ask the reader, what he will think of a minister of the Gospel, who cannot bear the texts of Scripture I have produced, nor my quotations out of the four evangelists? This, which in his Thoughts of the Causes of Atheism, p. 114, was want of "vivacity and elevation of mind," want of "a vein of sense and reason, yea, and of elocution too;" is here, in his Socinianism unmasked, a "tedious collection out of the four evangelists." Those places I have quoted lie heavy, it seems, upon his stomach, and are too many to be got off. But it was my business not to omit one of them, that the reader might have a full view of the whole tenour of the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, to the unconverted Jews and Gentiles; and might therein see what faith they were converted to, and upon their assent to which, they were pronounced believers, and admitted into the Christian church. But the unmasker complains, there are too many of them: he thinks the Gospel, the good news of salvation, tedious from the mouth of our Saviour and his apostles: he is of opinion, that before the epistles were writ, and without believing precisely what he thinks fit to cull out of them, there could be no Christians; and if we had nothing but the four evangelists, we could not be saved. And yet it is plain, that every single one of the four contains the Gospel of Jesus Christ; and, at least, they altogether contain all that is necessary to salvation. If any one doubt of this, I refer him to Mr. Chillingworth for satisfaction, who hath abundantly proved it.

His following words (were he not the same unmasker all through) would be beyond parallel: "But let us hear why the Vindicator did not attempt to collect any articles out of these writings; he assigns this as one rea-

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son: 'The epistles being writ to those who were already believers, it could not be supposed that they were writ to them, to teach them fundamentals,' p. 167, Vindic. Certainly no man would have conjectured, that he would have used such an evasion as this. I will say that for him, he goes beyond all surmises, he is above all conjectures, he hath a faculty which no creature on earth can ever fathom." Thus far the unmasker, in his oratorical strain. In what follows, he comes to his closer reasoning, against what I have said. His words are, " do we not know, that the four Gospels were writ to and for believers, as well as unbelievers?" Answ. I grant it. Now let us see your inference; therefore, what these holy historians recorded, that our Saviour and his apostles said and preached to unbelievers, was said and preached to believers. The discourse which our Saviour had with the woman of Samaria, and her townsmen, was addressed to believers; because St. John writ his Gospel (wherein it is recorded as a part of our Saviour's history) for believers as well as unbelievers. St. Peter's preaching to Cornelius, and St. Paul's preaching at Antioch, at Thessalonica, at Corinth, &c. was not to unbelievers, for their conversion; because St. Luke dedicates his history of the Acts of the Apostles to Theophilus, who was a Christian, as the unmasker strenuously proves in this paragraph. Just as if he should say, that the discourses, which Cæsar records he had upon several occasions with the Gauls, were not addressed to the Gauls alone, but to the Romans also; because his commentaries were writ for the Romans, as well as others; or that the sayings of the ancient Greeks and Romans in Plutarch, were not spoken by them to their contemporaries only, because they are recorded by him for the benefit of posterity.

I perused the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles to the unconverted world, to see what they taught and required to be believed, to make men Christians: and all these I set down, and leave the world to judge what they contained. The epistles, which were all written to those who had embraced the faith, and were all Christians already, I thought would not so distinctly

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show what were those doctrines which were absolutely necessary to make men Christians; they being not writ to convert unbelievers, but to build up those who were already believers, in their most holy faith. This is plainly expressed in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. v. 11, &c. "Of whom (*i. e.* Christ) we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are all dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskilful in the word of righteousness; for he is a babe: but strong meat belongeth to him that is of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and bad. Therefore, leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, and of the doctrine of baptism, and of laying on of hands, and of the resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment." Here the apostle shows what was his design in writing this epistle, not to teach them the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, but to lead them on to more perfection; that is, to greater degrees of knowledge of the wise design and wonderful contrivance and carrying on of the Gospel, and the evidence of it; which he makes out in this epistle, by showing its correspondence with the Old Testament, and particularly with the economy of the Mosaical constitution. Here I might ask the unmasker, Whether those many things which St. Paul tells the Hebrews, he had to say of Christ, (hard to be uttered to them, because they were dull of hearing) had not an "immediate respect to the occasion, author, way, means, or issue of their redemption and salvation?" And therefore, "whether they were such things, without the knowledge of which they could not be saved?" as the unmasker says of such things, p. 23. And the like I might ask him, concerning those things which the apostle tells the Corinthians, 1 epist. chap. iii, 2, that they "were not able to

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bear." For much to the same purpose he speaks to the Corinthians, epist. 1, chap. iii. as in the above-cited places he did to the Hebrews: "That he, as a wise master-builder, had laid the foundation:" and that foundation he himself tells us is, "Jesus the Messiah;" and that there is no other foundation to be laid. And that in this he laid the foundation of Christianity at Corinth, St. Luke records, Acts xviii. 4, in these words, "Paul, at Corinth, reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath-day, and testified to the Jews, that Jesus was the Messiah." Upon which foundation, he tells them, there might be a superstructure. But that what is built on the foundation is not the foundation, I think I need not prove. He further tells them, that he had desired to build upon this foundation; but withal says, he had fed them until then "with milk, and not with meat; because they were babes, and had not been able to bear it, neither were they yet able." And therefore this epistle, we see, is almost wholly spent in reproofs of their miscarriages, and in exhortations and instructions relating to practice; and very little said in it, for the explaining any part of the great mystery of salvation, contained in the Gospel.

By these passages we may see, (were it not evident to common sense itself, from the nature of things) that the design of these epistles was not to lay the foundations, or teach the principles of the Christian religion; they being writ to those who received them, and were Christians already. The same holds in all the other epistles; and therefore the epistles seemed not to me the properest parts of Scripture to give us that foundation, distinct from all the superstructures built on it; because in the epistles the latter was the thing proposed, rather than the former. For the main intention of the apostles, in writing their epistles, could not be to do what was done already; to lay down barely the foundations of Christianity to those who were Christians already; but to build upon it some farther explication of it, which either their particular circumstances, or a general evidencing of the truth, wisdom, excellencies, and privileges, &c. of the Gospel required. This was

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the reason that persuaded me to take the articles of faith, absolutely necessary to be received to make a man a Christian, only from the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles to the unconverted world, as laid down in the historical part of the New Testament: and I thought it a good reason, it being past doubt, that they in their preachings proposed to the unconverted all that was necessary to be believed, to make them Christians; and also, that that faith, upon a profession whereof any one was admitted into the church, as a believer, had all that was necessary in it to make him a Christian; because, if it wanted any thing necessary, he had necessarily not been admitted: unless we can suppose, that any one was admitted into the Christian church by our Saviour and his apostles, who was not yet a Christian; or pronounced a believer, who yet wanted something necessary to make him a believer, *i. e.* was a believer and and not a believer, at the same time. But what those articles were which had been preached to those, to whom the epistles were writ, and upon the belief whereof they had been admitted into the Christian church, and became, as they are called, "believers, saints, faithful, elect," &c. could not be collected out of the epistles. This, though it were my reason, and must be a reason to every one, who would make this inquiry; and the unmasker quotes the place where I told him it was my reason; yet he, according to his never-erring illumination, flatly tells me, p. 38, that it was not; and adds, "Here then is want of sincerity," &c. I must desire him, therefore, to prove what he says, p. 38, viz.

XV. That, "by the same argument, that I would persuade, that the fundamentals are not to be sought for in the epistles, he can prove that they are not to be sought for in the Gospels and in the Acts; because, even these were writ to those that believed."

And next I desire him to prove, what he also says in the same page, viz.

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XVI. That "the epistles being writ to those that believed, was not an argument that I did make use of."

He tells us, p. 38, that it is the argument whereby I would persuade: and in the very same page, a few lines lower, says, "That it is not the argument I did make use of." Who, but an errant unmasker, would contradict himself so flatly in the same breath? And yet upon that he raises a complaint of my "want of sincerity."

For "want of sincerity" in one of us, we need not go far for an instance. The next paragraph, p. 38—40, affords us a gross one of it: wherein the unmasker argues strongly, not against any thing I had said, but against an untruth of his own setting up. Towards the latter end of the paragraph, p. 40, he has these words: "It is manifest, that the apostles, in their epistles, taught fundamentals; which is contrary to what this gentleman says, that such a thing could not be supposed." And therefore the unmasker has taken a great deal of pains to show, that there are fundamental doctrines to be found in the epistles; as if I had denied it. And, to lead the reader into an opinion that I had said so, he set down these words, "could not be supposed," as if they were my words. And so they are, but not to that purpose. And therefore he did well not to quote the page, lest the reader, by barely turning to the place, should have a clear sight of falsehood, instead of that sincerity, which he would make the reader believe is wanting in me. My words, p. 153 of The Reasonableness of Christianity, are, "*nor can it be supposed*, that the sending of such fundamentals was the reason of the apostles' writing to any of them." And a little lower: "The epistles therefore being all written to those that were already believers and Christians, the occasion and end of writing them could not be, to instruct them in that which was necessary to make them Christians." The thing then, that I denied, was not, that there were any fundamentals in the epistles. For in the next page I have these express words: "I do not deny, but

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the great doctrines of the Christian faith are dropped here and there, and scattered up and down in most of them." And therefore he might have spared his endeavours, in the next paragraph, to prove that there may be fundamentals found in the epistles, until he finds somebody that denies it. And here again I must repeat my usual question, that with this sincere writer is so often necessary, viz.

XVII. Where it is that I say, "That it cannot be supposed, that there are fundamental articles in the epistles?"

If he hopes to shift it off by the word Taught, which seems fallaciously put in; as if he meant, that there were some fundamental articles taught, necessary to be believed to make them Christians, in the epistles, which those whom they were writ to knew not before: in this sense I do deny it: and then this will be the

XVIIIth proposition remaining upon him to prove, viz.

"That there are fundamental articles necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian taught in the epistles, which those, whom they were writ to, knew not before."

The former part of his next paragraph, p. 40, runs thus: "Hear another feigned ground of his omitting the epistles, viz. because the fundamental articles are here promiscuously, and without distinction, mixed with other truths," p. 41. "But who sees not, that this is a mere elusion? For on the same account he might have forborn to search for fundamental articles in the Gospels; for they do not lie there together, but are dispersed up and down. The doctrinal and historical parts are mixed with one another, but he pretends to sever them. Why then did he not make a separation between the doctrines in the epistles, and those other matters that are treated of there? He has nothing

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to reply to this, and therefore we must again look upon what he has suggested as a cast of his shuffling faculty."

The argument contained in these words is this: A man cannot well distinguish fundamental from non-fundamental doctrines in the epistles, where they are promiscuously mixed with non-fundamental doctrines: therefore he cannot well distinguish fundamental doctrines from others in the Gospels, and the Acts, where they are mixed with matters of fact. As if he should say, one cannot well distinguish a bachelor of divinity from other divines, where several of them stand together promiscuously in the same habit; therefore one cannot distinguish a bachelor of divinity from a Billingsgate orator, where they stand together in their distinct habits: or that it is as easy to distinguish fine gold from that of a little lower allay, where several pieces of each are mixed together, as it is to distinguish pieces of fine gold from pieces of silver, which they are mixed amongst.

But it seems, the unmasker thinks it as easy to distinguish between fundamental and not fundamental doctrines, in a writing of the same author, where they are promiscuously mixed together, as it is to distinguish between a fundamental doctrine of faith, and a relation of a matter of fact, where they are intermixedly reported in the same history. When he has proved this, the unmasker will have more reason to tax me with elusion, shuffling, and feigning, in the reason I gave for not collecting fundamentals out of the epistles. Until then, all that noise must stand amongst those ridiculous airs of triumph and victory which he so often gives himself, without the least advantage to his cause, or edification of his reader, though he should a thousand times say, "That I have nothing to reply."

In the latter part of his paragraph he says, "That necessary truths, fundamental principles, may be distinguished from those that are not such, in the epistolary writings, by the nature and importance of them, by their immediate respect to the author and the means of our salvation." Answ. If this be so, I desire him

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to give me a definitive collection of fundamentals out of the Epistles, as I have given one out of the Gospels and the Acts. If he cannot do that, it is plain, he hath here given a distinguishing mark of fundamentals, by which he himself cannot distinguish them. But yet I am the shuffler.

The argument in the next paragraph, p. 41, is this: "Necessary doctrines of faith, such as God absolutely demands to be believed for justification, may be distinguished from rules of holy living, with which they are mixed in the epistles; therefore doctrines of faith necessary, and not necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, may be distinguished, as they stand mixed in the epistles." Which is as good sense as to say, lambs and kids may easily be distinguished in the same pen, where they are together, by their different natures: therefore the lambs I absolutely demand of you, as necessary to satisfy me, may be distinguished from others in the same pen, where they are mixed without any distinction. Doctrines of faith, and precepts of practice, are as distinguishable as doing and believing; and those as easily discernible one from another as thinking and walking: but doctrinal propositions, all of them of divine revelation, are of the same authority, and of the same species, in respect of the necessity of believing them; and will be eternally undistinguishable into necessary, and not necessary to be believed, until there be some other way found to distinguish them, than that they are in a book, which is all of divine revelation. Though therefore doctrines of faith, and rules of practice, are very distinguishable in the epistles, yet it does not follow from thence, that fundamental and not fundamental doctrines, points necessary and not necessary to be believed to make men Christians, are easily distinguishable in the epistles. Which, therefore, remains to be proved: and it remains incumbent upon him,

XVIII. "To set down the marks, whereby the doctrines, delivered in the epistles, may easily and

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exactly be distinguished into fundamental, and not fundamental articles of faith."

All the rest of that paragraph, containing nothing against me, must be bound up with a great deal of the like stuff, which the unmasker has put into his book, to show the world he does not "imitate me in impertinencies, incoherences, and trifling excursions," as he boasts in his first paragraph. Only I shall desire the reader to take the whole passage concerning this matter, as it stands in my Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 154, "I do not deny but the great doctrines of the Christian faith are dropped here and there, and scattered up and down in most of them. But it is not in the epistles we are to learn what are the fundamental articles of faith, where they are promiscuously, and without distinction, mixed with other truths and discourses, which were, (though for edification indeed, yet) only occasional. We shall find and discern those great and necessary points best, in the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, to those who were yet strangers and ignorant of the faith, to bring them in, and convert them to it." And then let him read these words, which the unmasker has quoted out of them: "It is not in the epistles that we are to learn what are the fundamental articles of faith; they were written for the resolving of doubts, and reforming of mistakes;" with his introduction of them in these words: "he commands the reader not to stir a jot further than the Acts." If I should ask him where that command appears, he must have recourse to his old shift, that he did not mean as he said, or else stand convicted of a malicious untruth. An orator is not bound to speak strict truth, though a disputant be. But this unmasker's writing against me will excuse him from being of the latter: and then why may not falsehoods pass for rhetorical flourishes, in one who hath been used to popular haranguing; to which men are not generally so severe as strictly to examine them, and expect that they should always be found to contain nothing but precise truth and strict reasoning? But yet I must not forget to put

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upon his score this other proposition of his, which he has, p. 42, and ask him to show,

XIX. "Where it is that I command my reader not to stir a jot farther than the Acts?"

In the next two paragraphs, p. 42—46, the unmasker is at his natural play, of declaiming without proving. It is pity the Mishna, out of which he takes his good breeding, as it told him, that "a well-bred and well-taught man answers to the first, in the first place," had not given him this rule too, about order, viz. That proving should go before condemning; else all the fierce exaggerations ill language can heap up, are but empty scurrility. But it is no wonder that the Jewish doctors should not provide rules for a Christian divine, turned unmasker. For where a cause is to be maintained, and a book to be writ, and arguments are not at hand, yet something must be found to fill it; railing in such cases is much easier than reasoning, especially where a man's parts lie that way.

The first of these paragraphs, p. 42, he begins thus: "But let us hear further what this vindicator saith to excuse his rejection of the doctrines contained in the epistles, and his putting us off with one article of faith." And then he quotes these following words of mine: "What if the author designed his treatise, as the title shows, chiefly for those who were not yet thoroughly and firmly Christians: purposing to work upon those, who either wholly disbelieved, or doubted of the truth of the Christian religion?"

Answ. This, as he has put it, is a downright falsehood. For the words he quotes were not used by me, "to excuse my rejection of the doctrines contained in the epistles," or to prove there was but one article; but as a reason why I omitted the mention of satisfaction.

To demonstrate this, I shall set down the whole passage, as it is, p. 163, 164, of my Vindication, where it runs thus:

"But what will become of me that I have not mentioned satisfaction?

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"Possibly this reverend gentleman would have had charity enough for a known writer of the brotherhood, to have found it by an innuendo in those words above quoted, of laying down his life for another. But every thing is to be strained here the other way. For the author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. is of necessity to be represented as a Socinian; or else his book may be read, and the truths in it, which Mr. Edwards likes not, be received; and people put upon examining. Thus one, as full of happy conjectures and suspicions as this gentleman, might be apt to argue. But what if the author designed his treatise, as the title shows, chiefly for those who were not yet thoroughly or firmly Christians; proposing to work on those who either wholly disbelieved, or doubted of the truth of the Christian religion?"

To this he tells me, p. 43, that my "title says nothing for me," *i. e.* shows not that I designed my book for those that disbelieved, or doubted of the Christian religion.

Answ. I thought that a title that professed the reasonableness of any doctrine, showed it was intended for those that were not fully satisfied of the reasonableness of it; unless books are to be writ to convince those of any thing, who are convinced already. But possibly this may be the unmasker's way: and if one should judge by his manner of treating this subject, with declamation instead of argument, one would think, that he meant it for nobody but those who were of his mind already. I thought, therefore, the Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scripture, a proper title to signify whom it was chiefly meant for: and, I thank God, I can, with satisfaction say, it has not wanted its effect upon some of them. But the unmasker proves for all that, that I could not design it chiefly for disbelievers or doubters of the Christian religion. "For," says he, p. 43, "how those that wholly disregard and disbelieve the Scriptures of the New Testament, as Gentiles, Jews, Mahometans, and atheists do," (I crave leave to put in theists, instead of atheists, for a reason presently to be mentioned), "are like to attend to the

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Reasonableness of Christianity, as delivered in the Scripture, is not to be conceived: and therefore we look upon this as all mere sham and sophistry." Answ. Though the unmasker teaches good breeding out of the Mishna, yet I thought he had been a minister of the Gospel, and had taught Christianity out of the Scripture. Why! good sir, would you teach Jews and Mahometans Christianity out of the Talmud and Alcoran; because they are the books that at present they attend to, and believe? Or would you, laying by the authority of all books, preach religion to infidels, in your own name, and by your own authority, laying aside the Scripture?' "Is it not to be conceived," no not by a Christian divine, that the way to make unbelievers Christians, is to show them the reasonableness of the religion contained in the Scriptures? But it seems the unmasker has a peculiar way of preaching and propagating Christianity without the Scripture; as some men have a peculiar way of disputing without reason.

In the beginning of this paragraph, p. 43, the unmasker, that is always a fair interpreter of my meaning, and never fails to know it better than I do, tells me, That by those that wholly disbelieve, "I must mean atheists, Turks, Jews, and pagans; and by those that are not firmly Christians, a few weak Christians." But did our unmasker never hear of unbelievers, under a denomination distinct from that of atheists, Turks, Jews, and pagans? Whilst the pulpit and the press have so often had up the name of theists or Deists, has that name wholly escaped him? It was these I chiefly designed, and I believe nobody of all that read my Vindication but the unmasker mistook me, if he did. But there at least, p. 165, he might have found the name, as of a sort of unbelievers not unknown amongst us. But, whatever he thought, it was convenient, and a sort of prudence in him (when he would persuade others that I had not a design, which I say I had) to lessen as much as he could, and cover the need of any such design; and so make it, that I could not intend my book to work upon those that disbelieved or did not firmly believe;

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by insinuating there were few or none such amongst us. Hence he says, that by those that are not thoroughly and firmly Christians, "I mean a *few* weak Christians;" as well, as under those who wholly disbelieve, he left the theists out of my meaning. I am very glad to hear from the unmasker, that there are but few weak Christians, few that have doubts about the truth of Christianity amongst us. But if there be not a great number of Deists, and that the preventing their increase be not worth every true Christian's care and endeavours, those who have been so loud against them have been much to blame; and I wish to God there were no reason for their complaints. For these therefore, I take the liberty to say, as I did before, that I chiefly designed my book; and shall not be ashamed of this sophistry, as you call it, if it can be sophistry to allege a matter of fact that I know; until you have arguments to convince me, that you know my intention in publishing it better than I do myself. And I shall think it still no blamable prudence, however you exclaim against prudence, (as perhaps you have some reason) that "I mentioned only those advantages, that all Christians are agreed in; and that I observed that command of the apostle, Rom. xiv. 1, 'Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations;' without being a Socinian. I think I did not amiss, that I offered to the belief of those that stood off that, and only that, which our Saviour and his apostles preached for the reducing the unconverted world. And would any one think he in earnest went about to persuade men to be Christians, who should use that as an argument to recommend the Gospel, which he has observed men to lay hold on as an objection against it? To urge such points of controversy as necessary articles of faith, when we see our Saviour and the apostles urged them not as necessary to be believed to make men Christians, is (by our own authority) to add prejudices to prejudices, and to block up our own way to those men, whom we would have access to, and prevail upon."

I have repeated this again out of the 164th page of my Vindication, where there is more to the same pur-

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pose, that the reader may see how fully the unmasker has answered it.

Because I said, "Would any one blame my prudence, if I mentioned only those advantages, which all Christians are agreed in?" the unmasker adds, p. 44, "Socinian Christians:" and then, as if the naming of that had gained him his point, he goes on victoriously thus: "He has bethought himself better, since he first published his notions, and (as the result of that) he now begins to resolve what he writ into prudence. I know whence he had this method, (and it is likely he has taken more than this from the same hands) viz. from the missionary Jesuits, that went to preach the Gospel to the people of China. We are told, that they instructed them in some matters relating to our Saviour; they let them know that Jesus was the Messias, the person promised to be sent into the world: but they concealed his sufferings and death, and they would not let them know any thing of his passion and crucifixion. So our author (their humble imitator) undertakes to instruct the world in Christianity, with an omission of its principal articles; and more especially that of the advantage we have by Christ's death, which was the prime thing designed in his coming into the world. This he calls prudence: so that to hide from the people the main articles of the Christian religion, to disguise the faith of the Gospel, to betray Christianity itself, is, according to this excellent writer, the cardinal virtue of prudence. May we be delivered then, say I, from a prudential Racovian!" And there ends the rattling for this time; not to be outdone by any piece of clockwork in the town. When he is once set a going, he runs on like an alarum, always in the same strain of noisy, empty declamation, (wherein every thing is supposed, and nothing proved) till his own weight has brought him to the ground: and then, being wound up with some new topic, takes another run, whether it makes for or against him, it matters not; he has laid about him with ill language, let it light where it will, and the vindicator is paid off.

That I may keep the due distance in our different

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ways of writing, I shall show the reader, that I say not this at random; but that the place affords me occasion to say so. He begins this paragraph with these words, p. 42, "Let us hear farther, what this vindicator says to excuse his rejection of the doctrines contained in the epistles." This rejection of the doctrines contained in the epistles, was the not mentioning the satisfaction of Christ, amongst those advantages I showed that the world received by his coming. This appears by the words he here quotes, as my excuse for that omission. In which place, I also produced some passages in my book, which sounded like it, some words of Scripture that are used to prove it; but this will not content him: I am, for all that, a "betrayer of Christianity, and contemner of the epistles." Why? Because I did not, out of them, name satisfaction. If you will have the truth of it, sir, there is not any such word in any one of the epistles, or other books of the New Testament, in my Bible, as satisfying, or satisfaction made by our Saviour; and so I could not put it into my Christianity as delivered in the Scripture. If mine be not a true Bible, I desire you to furnish me with one that is more orthodox; or, if the translators have "hid that main article of the Christian religion," they are the "betrayers of Christianity, and contemners of the epistles," who did not put it there; and not I, who did not take a word from thence, which they did not put there. For truly I am not a maker of creeds; nor dare add either to the Scripture, or to the fundamental articles of the Christian religion.

But you will say, satisfaction, though not named in the epistles, yet may plainly be collected out of them. Answ. And so it may out of several places in my Reasonableness of Christianity, some whereof, which I took out of the Gospels, I mentioned in my Vindication, p. 163, 164, and others of them, which I took out of the epistles, I shall point out to you now: as p. 41, I say, the design of our Saviour's coming was to be *offered* up; and p. 84, I speak of the work of our *redemption*; words, which in the epistles, are taken to imply satisfaction. And therefore if that be enough, I see not

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but I may be free from betraying Christianity; but if it be necessary to name the word Satisfaction, and he that does not so is a betrayer of Christianity, you will do well to consider, how you will acquit the holy apostles from that bold imputation; which if it be extended as far as it will go, will scarce come short of blasphemy: for I do not remember, that our Saviour has any where named satisfaction, or implied it plainer in any words, than those I have quoted from him; and he, I hope, will escape the intemperance of your tongue.

You tell me, I had my "prudence from the missionary Jesuits in China, who concealed our Saviour's sufferings and death, because I undertake to instruct the world in Christianity, with an omission of its principal articles." And I pray, sir, from whom did you learn your prudence, when, taking upon you to teach the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, in your Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, you left out several, that you have been pleased since to add in your Socinianism unmasked? Or, if I, as you say here, betray Christianity by this omission of this principal article; what do you, who are a professed teacher of it, if you omit any principal article, which your prudence is so wary in, that you will not say you have given us all that are necessary to salvation, in that list you have last published? I pray, who acts best the Jesuit, (whose humble imitator, you say, I am) you or I? when, pretending to give a catalogue of fundamentals, you have not reduced them to direct propositions, but have left some of them indefinite, to be collected as every one pleases: and instead of telling us it is a perfect catalogue of fundamentals, plainly shuffle it off, and tell me, p. 22, "If that will not content me, you are sure you can do nothing that will: if I require more, it is folly in you to comply with me?" One part of what you here say, I own to you, savours not much of the skill of a Jesuit. You confess your inability, and I believe it to be perfectly true: that if what you have done already (which is nothing at all) "will not content me, you are sure, you can do nothing that will content me," or any reasonable man that shall demand of you a complete catalogue of

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fundamentals. But you make it up pretty well, with a confidence becoming one of that order. For he must have rubbed his forehead hard, who in the same treatise, where he so severely condemns the imperfection of my list of fundamentals, confesses that he cannot give a complete catalogue of his own.

You publish to the world in this 44th, and the next page, that "I hide from the people the main articles of the Christian religion; I disguise the faith of the Gospel, betray Christianity itself, and imitate the Jesuits that went to preach the Gospel to the people of China, by my omission of its principal or main articles."

Answ. I know not how I disguise the faith of the Gospel, &c. in imitation of the Jesuits in China; unless taking men off from the inventions of men, and recommending to them the reading and study of the holy Scripture, to find what the Gospel is, and requires, be "a disguising the faith of the Gospel, a betraying of Christianity, and imitating the Jesuits." Besides, sir, if one may ask you, In what school did you learn that prudent wariness and reserve, which so eminently appears, p. 24, of your Socinianism unmasked, in these words: "These articles" (meaning those which you had before enumerated as fundamental articles) of faith, "are such as must *in some measure* be known and assented to by a Christian, such as must *generally* be received and embraced by him?" You will do well the next time to set down how far your fundamentals must be known, assented to, and received; to avoid the suspicion, that there is a little more of Jesuitism in these expressions, "in some measure known and assented to, and generally received and embraced," than what becomes a sincere protestant preacher of the Gospel. For your speaking so doubtfully of knowing and assenting to those, which you give us for fundamental doctrines, which belong (as you say) to the very essence of Christianity, will hardly escape being imputed to your want of knowledge, or want of sincerity. And indeed, the word "general" is in familiar use with you, and stands you in good stead, when you would say something, you

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know not what; as I shall have occasion to remark to you, when I come to your 91st page.

Further, I do not remember where it was, that I mentioned or undertook to set down all the "principal or main articles of Christianity." To change the terms of the question, from articles necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, into principal or main articles, looks a little Jesuitical. But to pass by that: the apostles, when they "went to preach the Gospel to people" as much strangers to it as the Chinese were when the Europeans came first amongst them, "Did they hide from the people the main articles of the Christian religion, disguise the faith of the Gospel, and betray Christianity itself?" If they did not, I am sure I have not: for I have not omitted any of the main articles, which they preached to the unbelieving world. Those I have set down, with so much care, not to omit any of them, that you blame me for it more than once, and call it tedious. However you are pleased to acquit or condemn the apostles in the case, by your supreme determination, I am very indifferent. If you think fit to condemn them for "disguising or betraying the Christian religion," because they said no more of satisfaction than I have done, in their preaching at first to their unbelieving auditors, Jews or heathens, to make them, as I think, Christians, (for that I am now speaking of) I shall not be sorry to be found in their company, under what censure soever. If you are pleased graciously to take off this your censure from them, for this omission, I shall claim a share in the same indulgence.

But to come to what, perhaps, you will think yourself a little more concerned not to censure, and what the apostles did so long since; for you have given instances of being very apt to make bold with the dead: Pray tell me, does the church of England admit people into the church of Christ at hap-hazard? or without proposing and requiring a profession of all that is necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian? If she does not, I desire you to turn to the baptism of those of riper years in our liturgy: where the priest, asking

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the convert particularly, whether he believes the Apostles' Creed, which he repeats to him; upon his profession that he does, and that he desires to be baptized into that faith, without one word of any other articles, baptizes him; and then declares him a Christian in these words: "We receive this person into the congregation of Christ's flock, and sign him with the sign of the cross, in token that he shall not be ashamed—to *continue* Christ's faithful soldier and servant." In all this there is not one word of satisfaction, no more than in my book, nor so much neither. And here I ask you, Whether for this omission you will pronounce that the church of England disguises the faith of the Gospel? However you think fit to treat me, yet methinks you should not let yourself loose so freely against our first reformers and the fathers of our church ever since, as to call them "Betrayers of Christianity itself;" because they think not so much necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, as you are pleased to put down in your articles; but omit, as well as I, your "main article of satisfaction."

Having thus notably harangued upon the occasion of my saying, "Would any one blame my prudence?" and thereby made me a "Socinian, a Jesuit, and a betrayer of Christianity itself," he has in that answered all that such a miscreant as I do or can say; and so passes by all the reasons I gave for what I did; without any other notice or answer, but only denying a matter of fact, which I only can know, and he cannot, viz. my design in printing my Reasonableness of Christianity.

In the next paragraph, p. 45, in answer to the words of St. Paul, Rom. xiv. 1, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations;" which I brought as a reason why I mentioned not satisfaction amongst the benefits received by the coming of our Saviour; because, as I tell him in my Vindication, p. 164, my Reasonableness of Christianity, as the title shows, "was designed chiefly for those who were not yet thoroughly or firmly Christians." He replies, and I desire him to prove it,

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XX. "That I pretend a design of my book, which was never so much as thought of, until I was solicited by my brethren to vindicate it."

All the rest in this paragraph, being either nothing to this place of the Romans, or what I have answered elsewhere, needs no farther answer.

The next two paragraphs, p. 46—49, are meant for an answer to something I had said concerning the Apostles' Creed, upon the occasion of his charging my book with Socinianism. They begin thus:

This "author of the new Christianity" [Answ. This new Christianity is as old as the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, and a little older than the unmasker's system] "wisely objects, that the Apostles' Creed hath none of those articles which I mention," p. 591, &c. Answ. If that author wisely objects, the unmasker would have done well to have replied wisely. But for a man wisely to reply, it is in the first place requisite, that the objection be truly and fairly set down in its full force, and not represented short, and as will best serve the answerer's turn to reply to. This is neither wise nor honest: and this first part of a wise reply the unmasker has failed in. This will appear from my words, and the occasion of them. The unmasker had accused my book of Socinianism, for omitting some points, which he urged as necessary articles of faith. To which I answered, That he had done so only "to give it an ill name, not because it was Socinian; for he had no more reason to charge it with Socinianism, for the omissions he mentions, than the Apostles' Creed." These are my words, which he should have either set down out of p. 67, which he quotes, or at least given the objection as I put it, if he had meant to have cleared it by a fair answer. But he, instead thereof, contents himself that "I object, that the Apostles' Creed hath none of those articles and doctrines which the unmasker mentioned." Answ. This at best is but a part of my objection, and not to the purpose which I there meant, without the rest joined to it; which it has pleased the unmasker, according to

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his laudable way, to conceal. My objection, therefore, stands thus:

> That the same articles, for the omission whereof the unmasker charges my book with Socinianism, being also omitted in the Apostles' Creed, he has no more reason to charge my book with Socinianism, for the omissions mentioned, than he hath to charge the Apostles' Creed with Socinianism.

To this objection of mine, let us now see how he answers, p. 47.

"Nor does any considerate man wonder at it," [*i. e.* that the Apostles' Creed had none of those articles and doctrines which he had mentioned] "for the creed is a form of outward profession, which is chiefly to be made in the public assemblies, when prayers are put up in the church, and the holy Scriptures are read: then this abridgment of faith is properly used, or when there is not time or opportunity to make any enlargement. But we are not to think it expressly contains in it all the necessary and weighty points, all the important doctrines of belief; it being only designed to be an abstract."

Answ. Another indispensable requisite in a wise reply is, that it should be pertinent. Now what can there be more impertinent, than to confess the matter of fact upon which the objection is grounded; but, instead of destroying the inference drawn from that matter of fact, only amuse the reader with wrong reasons, why that matter of fact was so?

No considerate man, he says, doth wonder, that the articles and doctrines he mentioned are omitted in the Apostles' Creed: because "that creed is a form of outward profession." Answ. A profession! of what, I beseech you? Is it a form to be used for form's sake? I thought it had been a profession of something, even of the Christian faith: and if it be so, any considerate man may wonder necessary articles of the Christian faith should be left out of it. For how it can be an outward

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profession of the Christian faith, without containing the Christian faith, I do not see; unless a man can outwardly profess the Christian faith in words, that do not contain or express it, *i. e.* profess the Christian faith, when he does not profess it. But he says, "It is a profession chiefly to be made use of in assemblies." Answ. Do those solemn assemblies privilege it from containing the necessary articles of the Christian religion? This proves not that it does not, or was not designed to contain all the articles necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian; unless the unmasker can prove that a "form of outward profession" of the Christian faith, that contains all such necessary articles, cannot be made use of in the public assemblies. "In the public assemblies," says he, "when prayers are put up by the church, and the holy Scriptures are read, then this abridgment of faith is properly used; or when there is not generally time or opportunity to make an enlargement." Answ. But that which contains not what is absolutely necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, can nowhere be properly used as a form of outward profession of the Christian faith, and least of all, in the solemn public assemblies. All the sense I can make of this is, that this abridgment of the Christian faith, *i. e.* imperfect collection (as the unmasker will have it) of some of the fundamental articles of Christianity in the Apostles' Creed, which omits the greatest part of them, is made use of as a form of outward profession of but part of the Christian faith in the public assemblies; when, by reason of reading of the Scripture and prayers, there is not time or opportunity for a full and perfect profession of it.

It is strange the Christian church should not find time nor opportunity, in sixteen hundred years, to make, in any of her public assemblies, a profession of so much of her faith as is necessary to make a man a Christian. But pray tell me, has the church any such full and complete form of faith, that hath in it all those propositions, you have given us for necessary articles, (not to say any thing of those which you have reserved to yourself, in your own breast, and will not communicate) of which

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the Apostles' Creed is only a scanty form, a brief, imperfect abstract, used only to save time in the crowd of other pressing occasions, that are always in haste to be despatched? If she has, the unmasker will do well to produce it. If the church has no such complete form, besides the Apostles' Creed, any where, of fundamental articles; he will do well to leave talking idly of this abstract, as he goes on to do in the following words:

"But," says he, "we are not to think that it expressly contains in it all the necessary and weighty points, all the important doctrines of our belief; it being only designed to be an abstract." Answ. Of what, I beseech you, is it an abstract? For here the unmasker stops short, and, as one that knows not well what to say, speaks not out what it is an abstract of; but provides himself a subterfuge in the generality of the preceding terms, of "necessary and weighty points, and important doctrines," jumbled together; which can be there of no other use, but to cover his ignorance or sophistry. But the question being only about necessary points, to what purpose are weighty and important doctrines joined to them; unless he will say, that there is no difference between necessary and weighty points, fundamental and important doctrines; and if so, then the distinction of points into necessary and not necessary will be foolish and impertinent; and all the doctrines contained in the Bible will be absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed by every man to make him a Christian. But taking it for granted, that the distinction of truths contained in the Gospel into points absolutely necessary, and not absolutely necessary, to be believed to make a man a Christian, is good; I desire the unmasker to tell us, what the Apostles' Creed is an abstract of? He will, perhaps, answer, that he has told us already in this very page, where he says, it is an abridgment of faith: and he has said true in words, but saying those words by rote, after others, without understanding them, he has said so in a sense that is not true. For he supposes it an abridgment of faith, by containing only a few of the necessary articles of faith, and leaving out the far greater part of them; and so takes

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a part of a thing for an abridgment of it; whereas an abridgment or abstract of any thing, is the whole in little; and if it be of a science or doctrine, the abridgment consists in the essential or necessary parts of it contracted into a narrower compass than where it lies diffused in the ordinary way of delivery, amongst a great number of transitions, explanations, illustrations, proofs, reasonings, corollaries, &c. All which, though they make a part of the discourse, wherein that doctrine is delivered, are left out in the abridgment of it, wherein all the necessary parts of it are drawn together into a less room. But though an abridgment need to contain none but the essential and necessary parts, yet all those it ought to contain; or else it will not be an abridgment or abstract of that thing, but an abridgment only of a part of it. I think it could not be said to be an abridgment of the law contained in an act of parliament, wherein any of the things required by that act were omitted; which yet commonly may be reduced into a very narrow compass, when stripped of all the motives, ends, enacting forms, &c. expressed in the act itself. If this does not satisfy the unmasker what is properly an abridgment, I shall refer him to Mr. Chillingworth, who, I think, will be allowed to understand sense, and to speak it properly, at least as well as the unmasker. And what he says happens to be in the very same question, between Knot, the Jesuit, and him, that is here between the unmasker and me: it is but putting the unmasker in the Jesuit's place, and myself (if it may be allowed me, without vanity) in Mr. Chillingworth, the protestant's; and Mr. Chillingworth's very words, chap. iv. § 65, will exactly serve for my answer: "You trifle affectedly, confounding the apostles' belief of the whole religion of Christ, as it comprehends both what we are to do, and what we are to believe, with that part of it which contains not duties of obedience, but only the necessary articles of simple faith. Now, though the apostles' belief be, in the former sense, a larger thing than that which we call the Apostles' Creed; yet, in the latter sense of the word, the Creed (I say) is a full comprehension of their belief, which you yourself have formerly.

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confessed, though somewhat fearfully and inconsistently. And here again, unwillingness to speak the truth makes you speak that which is hardly sense, and call it 'an abridgment of some articles of faith.' For I demand, those some articles, which you speak of, which are they? Those that are out of the Creed, or those that are in it? Those that are in it, it comprehends at large, and therefore it is not an abridgment of them. Those that are out of it, it comprehends not at all, and therefore it is not an abridgment of them. If you would call it now an abridgment of faith, this would be sense, and signify thus much, that all the necessary articles of the Christian faith are comprised in it. For this is the proper duty of abridgments, to leave out nothing necessary." So that, in Mr. Chillingworth's judgment of an abridgment, it is not sense to say, as you do, p. 47, That "we are not to think, that the Apostles' Creed expressly contains in it all the necessary points of our belief, it being only designed to be an abstract, or an abridgment of faith:" but, on the contrary, we must conclude, it contains in it all the necessary articles of faith, for that very reason; because it is an abridgment of faith, as the unmasker calls it. But whether this that Mr. Chillingworth has given us here be the nature of an abridgment or no; this is certain, that the Apostles' Creed cannot be a form of profession of the Christian faith, if any part of the faith necessary to make a man a Christian be left out of it: and yet such a profession of faith would the unmasker have this abridgment of faith to be. For a little lower, in the 47th page, he says in express terms, That "if a man believe no more than is, in express terms, in the Apostles' Creed, his faith will not be the faith of a Christian;" wherein he does great honour to the primitive church, and particularly to the church of England. The primitive church admitted converted heathens to baptism, upon the faith contained in the Apostles' Creed: a bare profession of that faith, and no more, was required of them to be received into the church, and made members of Christ's body. How little different the faith of the ancient church was, from the faith

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I have mentioned, may be seen in these words of Tertullian: "Regula fidei una omnino est, sola, immobilis, irreformabilis, credendi, scilicet, in unicum Deum omnipotentem, mundi conditorem, et Filium ejus Jesum Christum, natum ex Virgine Maria, crucifixum sub Pontio Pilato, tertia die resuscitatum à mortuis, receptum in cœlis, sedentem nunc ad dextram Patris, venturum judicare vivos et mortuos, per carnis etiam resurrectionem. Hâc lege fidei manente, cætera jam disciplinæ et conversationis admittunt novitatem correctionis:" Tert. de Virg. Velan. in principio. This was the faith, that in Tertullian's time sufficed to make a Christian. And the church of England, as I have remarked already, only proposes the articles of the Apostles' Creed to the convert to be baptized; and upon his professing a belief of them asks, Whether he will be baptized in this faith; which (if we will believe the unmasker) "is not the faith of a Christian." However, the church, without any more ado, upon the profession of this faith, and no other, baptizes him into it. So that the ancient church, if the unmasker may be believed, baptized converts into that faith, which "is not the faith of a Christian;" and the church of England, when she baptizes any one, makes him not a Christian. For he that is baptized only into a faith, that "is not the faith of a Christian," I would fain know how he can thereby be made a Christian? So that if the omissions, which he so much blames in my book, make me a Socinian, I see not how the church of England will escape that censure; since those omissions are in that very confession of faith which she proposes, and upon a profession whereof, she baptizes those whom she designs to make Christians. But it seems that the unmasker (who has made bold to unmask her too) reasons right, that the church of England is mistaken, and makes none but Socinians Christians; or (as he is pleased now to declare) no Christians at all. Which, if true, the unmasker had best look to it, whether he himself be a Christian, or no; for it is to be feared, he was baptized only into that faith, which he himself confesses "is not the faith of a Christian."

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But he brings himself off, in these following words: "all matters of faith, in some manner, may be reduced to this brief platform of belief." Answ. If that be enough to make him a true and an orthodox Christian, he does not consider whom, in this way, he brings off with him; for I think he cannot deny, that all matters of faith, in some manner, may be reduced to that abstract of faith which I have given, as well as to that brief platform in the Apostles' Creed. So that, for aught I see, by this rule, we are Christians or not Christians, orthodox or not orthodox, equally together.

But yet he says, in the next words: when he calls it an "abstract, or abbreviature, it is implied, that there are more truths to be known and assented to by a Christian, in order to making him really so, than what we meet with here." The quite contrary whereof (as has been shown) is implied, by its being called an abstract. But what is that to the purpose? It is not fit abstracts and abbreviatures should stand in an unmasker's way. They are sounds men have used for what they pleased; and why may not the unmasker do so too, and use them in a sense, that may make the Apostles' Creed be only a broken scrap of the Christian faith? However, in great condescension, being willing to do the Apostles' Creed what honour he could, he says, That "all matters of faith, in some manner, may be reduced to this brief platform of belief." But yet, when it is set in competition with the creed, which he himself is making, (for it is not yet finished) it is by no means to be allowed as sufficient to make a man a Christian: "There are more truths to be known and assented to, in order to make a man really a Christian." Which, what they are, the church of England shall know, when this new reformer thinks fit; and then she may be able to propose to those who are not yet so, a collection of articles of belief, and baptize them anew into a faith, which will really make them Christians: but hitherto, if the unmasker may be credited, she has failed in it.

"Yet he craves leave to tell me," in the following words, p. 48, "That the Apostles' Creed hath more in

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it than I or my brethren will subscribe to." Were it not the undoubted privilege of the unmasker to know me better than I do myself, (for he is always telling me something of myself which I did not know) I would, in my turn, crave leave to tell him, that this is the faith I was baptized into, no one title whereof I have renounced, that I know; and that I heretofore thought that gave me title to be a Christian. But the unmasker hath otherwise determined: and I know not now where to find a Christian. For the belief of the Apostles' Creed will not, it seems, make a man one: and what other belief will, it does not yet please the unmasker to tell us. But yet, as to the subscribing to the Apostles' Creed, I must take leave to say, however the unmasker may be right in the faith, he is out in the morals of a Christian; it being against the charity of one, that is really so, to pronounce, as he does, peremptorily in a thing that he cannot know; and to affirm positively what I know to be a downright falsehood. But what others will do, it is not my talent to determine; that belongs to the unmasker; though, as to all that are my brethren in the Christian faith, I may answer for them too, that they will also, with me, do that, without which, in that sense, they cannot be my brethren.

Page 49, the unmasker smartly convinces me of no small blunder, in these words: "But was it not judiciously said by this writer, that 'it is well for the compilers of the Creed, that they lived not in my days?' p. 12, I tell you, friend, it was impossible they should; for the learned Usher and Vossius, and others have proved, that that symbol was drawn up, not at once, but that some articles of it were adjoined many years after, far beyond the extent of any man's life; and therefore the compilers of the Creed could not live in my days, nor could I live in theirs." Answ. But it seems that, had they lived all together, you could have lived in their days. "But," says he, "I let this pass, as one of the blunders of our thoughtful and musing author." Answ. And I tell you, friend, that,

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unless it were to show your reading in Usher and Vossius, you had better have let this blunder of mine alone. Does not the unmasker give here a clear proof, that he is no changeling? Whatever argument he takes in hand, weighty or trivial, material or not material to the thing in question, he brings it to the same sort of sense and force. He would show me guilty of an absurdity in saying, "It is well for the compilers of the creed, that they lived not in his days." This he proves to be a blunder, because they all lived not in one another's days; therefore it was an absurdity to suppose, they might all live in his days. As if there were any greater absurdity to bring the compilers, who lived, possibly, within a few centuries of one another, by a supposition, into one time; than it is to bring the unmasker, and any one of them who lived a thousand years distant one from another, by a supposition, to be contemporaries: for it is by reason of the compilers' living at a distance one from another, that he proves it impossible for him to be their contemporary. As if it were not as impossible in fact, for him who was not born until above a thousand years after, to live in any of their days, as it is for any one of them to live in either of those compilers' days that died before him. The supposition of their living together is as easy of one as the other, at what distance soever they lived, and how many soever there were of them. This being so, I think it had been better for the unmasker to have let alone the blunder, and showed (which was his business) that he does not accuse the compilers of the Creed of being all over Socinianised, as well as he does me, since they were as guilty as I of the omission of those articles, (viz. "that Christ is the word of God: that Christ was God incarnate: the eternal and ineffable generation of the Son of God: that the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son, which expresses their unity;" for the omission whereof, the unmasker laid Socinianism to my charge. So that it remains still upon his score to show,

XXI. "Why these omissions in the Apostles' Creed do not as well make that abstract, as my abridgment of faith, to be Socinian?"

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Page 57, the unmasker "desires the reader to observe, that this lank faith of mine is in a manner no other than the faith of a Turk." And I desire the reader to observe, that this faith of mine was all that our Saviour and his apostles preached to the unbelieving world. And this our unmasker cannot deny, as I think will appear to any one, who observes what he says, pp. 76, 77, of his Socinianism unmasked. And that they preached nothing but a "faith, that was in a manner no other than the faith of a Turk," I think none amongst Christians, but this bold unmasker, will have the irreverence profanely to say.

He tells us, p. 54, that "the Musselmen" (or, as he has, for the information of his reader, very pertinently proved it should be writ, Moslemim; without which, perhaps, we should not have known his skill in Arabic, or, in plain English, the Mahometans) "believe that Christ is a good man, and not above the nature of a man, and sent of God to give instruction to the world: and my faith," he says, "is of the very same scantling." This I shall desire him to prove; or, which in other words he insinuates in this and the neighbouring pages, viz.

XXII. That that faith, which I have affirmed to be the faith which is required to make a man a Christian, is no other than what Turks believe, and is contained in the Alcoran.

Or, as he expresses it himself, p. 55,

"That a Turk, according to me, is a Christian; for I make the same faith serve them both."

And particularly to show where it is I say,

XXIII. That "Christ is not above the nature of a man," or have made that a necessary article of the Christian faith.

And next, where it is,

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XXIV. "That I speak as meanly of Christ's suffering on the cross, and death, as if there were no such thing."

For thus he says of me, p. 54, "I seem to have consulted the Mahometan Bible, which did say, Christ did not suffer on the cross, did not die. For I, and my allies, speak as meanly of these articles as if there were no such thing."

To show our unmasker's veracity in this case, I shall trouble my reader with some passages out of my Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 35, "When we consider, that he was to fill out the time foretold of his ministry, and after a life illustrious in miracles and good works, attended with humility, meekness, patience, and suffering, and every way conformable to the prophecies of him, should be led as a sheep to the slaughter, and, with all quiet and submission, be brought to the cross, though there were no guilt or fault found in him." And, p. 42, "contrary to the design of his coming, which was to be offered up a lamb, blameless and void of offence." And, p. 68, "laying down his life, both for Jews and Gentiles." P. 96, "Given up to contempt, torment, and death." But, say what I will, when the unmasker thinks fit to have it so, it is speaking out of the Mahometan Bible, that "Christ did not suffer on the cross, did not die; or at least, is speaking as meanly of these articles as if no such thing had been."

His next slander is, p. 55, in these words: "this gentleman presents the world with a very ill notion of faith; for the very devils are capable of all that faith, which, he says, makes a Christian." It is not strange, that the unmasker should misrepresent the faith which, I say, makes a Christian; when it seems to be his whole design to misrepresent my meaning every where. The frequency of his doing it, I have showed in abundance of instances, to which I shall add an eminent one here; which shows what a fair champion he is for truth and religion.

Page 104, of my Reasonableness of Christianity, I

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give this account of the faith which makes a Christian; that it is "men's entering themselves in the kingdom of God; owning and professing themselves the subjects of Jesus, whom they believe to be the Messiah, and receive for their Lord and King: for that was to be baptized in his name." This sense of believing Christ to be the Messiah, that is, to take him for our King and Lord, who is to be obeyed, I have expressed over and over again; as, pp. 110, 111, my words are, "that as many of them as would believe Jesus the Son of God, (whom he sent into the world) to be the Messiah, the promised Deliverer, and would receive him for their King and Ruler, should have all their past sins, disobedience, and rebellion, forgiven them. And if, for the future, they lived in sincere obedience to his law, to the utmost of their power, the sins of human frailty for the time to come, as well as those of their past lives, should for his Son's sake, because they gave themselves up to him to be his subjects, be forgiven them: and so their faith, which made them to be baptized into his name, (*i. e.* enrol themselves in the kingdom of Jesus, the Messiah, and profess themselves his subjects, and consequently live by the laws of his kingdom) should be accounted to them for righteousness." Which account of what is necessary, I close with these words: "this is the faith, for which God of his free grace justifies sinful man." And is this the faith of devils?

To the same purpose, p. 113, are these words: "the chief end of his coming was to be a king; and, as such, to be received by those who would be his subjects in the kingdom which he came to erect." And again, p. 112, "only those who have believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and taken him for their King, with a sincere endeavour after righteousness in obeying his law, shall have their past sins not imputed to them." And so again, pp. 113, and 120, and in several other places; of which I shall add but this one more, p. 120, "it is not enough to believe him to be the Messiah, unless we obey his laws, and take him to be our King to reign

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over us." Can the devils thus believe him to be the Messiah? Yet this is that, which, by these and abundance of other places, I have showed to be the meaning of believing him to be the Messiah.

Besides, I have expressly distinguished the faith which makes a Christian, from that which the devils have, by proving, that, to the believing Jesus to be the Messiah, must be joined repentance, or else it will not make them true Christians: and what this repentance is, may be seen at large in p. 105, &c. some expressions whereof I shall here set down; as, p. 105, "repentance does not consist in one single act of sorrow, (though that being first, and leading, gives denomination to the whole) but in doing works meet for repentance; in a sincere obedience to the law of Christ, the remainder of our lives." Again; to distinguish the faith of a Christian from that of devils, I say expressly, out of St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians, "that which availeth is faith, but faith working by love; and that faith, without works, *i. e.* the works of sincere obedience to the law and will of Christ, is not sufficient for our justification." And, p. 117, That to inherit eternal life, we must love the Lord our God, "with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind." And, p. 121, "Love Christ, in keeping his commandments."

This, and a great deal more to this purpose, may be seen in my Reasonableness of Christianity; particularly where I answer that objection about the faith of devils, which I handle in p. 102, &c. and therein at large show, wherein the faith of devils comes short of the justifying faith which makes a Christian. And yet the good, the sincere, the candid unmasker, with his becoming confidence, tells his readers here, p. 55, "That I present the world with a very ill notion of faith: for the very devils are capable of all that faith, which I say makes a Christian man."

To prevent this calumny, I, in more places than one, distinguished between faith, in a strict sense, as it is a bare assent to any proposition, and that which is called evangelical faith, in a larger sense of the word; which

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comprehends under it something more than a bare simple assent; as, p. 26, "I mean, this is all that is required to be believed by those who acknowledge but one eternal, invisible God, the maker of heaven and earth: for that there is something more required to salvation, besides believing, we shall see hereafter." P. 28, "All I say, that was to be believed for justification. For, that this was not all that was required to be done for justification, we shall see hereafter." P. 51, "Obeying the law of the Messiah, their King, being no less required, than their believing that Jesus was the Messiah, the King and Deliverer, that was promised them." P. 102, "As far as their believing could make them members of Christ's body." By these, and more, the like passages in my book, my meaning is so evident, that nobody, but an unmasker, would have said, that when I spoke of believing, as a bare speculative assent to any proposition, as true, I affirmed that was all that was required of a Christian for justification: though that, in the strict sense of the word, is all that is done in believing. And therefore, I say, As far as mere believing could make them members of Christ's body; plainly signifying, as much as words can, that the faith, for which they were justified, included something more than a bare assent. This appears, not only from these words of mine, p. 104, "St. Paul, often in his epistles, puts faith for the whole duty of a Christian;" but from my so often, and almost every where, interpreting "believing him to be the Messiah, by taking him to be our King;" whereby is meant not a bare idle speculation, a bare notional persuasion of any truth whatsoever, floating in our brains; but an active principle of life, a faith working by love and obedience. "To make him to be our King," carries with it a right disposition of the will to honour and obey him, joined to that assent wherewith believers embrace this fundamental truth, that Jesus was the person who was by God sent to be their King; he that was promised to be their Prince and Saviour.

But, for all this, the unmasker, p. 56, confidently tells his reader, that I say no such thing. His words

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are: "But, besides this historical faith, (as it is generally called by divines) which is giving credit to evangelical truths, as barely revealed, there must be something else added to make up the true substantial faith of a Christian. With the assent of the understanding, must be joined the consent or approbation of the will. All those divine truths which the intellect assents to, must be allowed of by this elective power of the soul. True evangelical faith is a hearty acceptation of the Messias, as he is offered in the Gospel. It is a sincere and impartial submission to all things required by the evangelical law, which is contained in the epistles, as well as the other writings. And to this practical assent and choice, there must be added, likewise, a firm trust and reliance in the blessed author of our salvation. But this late undertaker, who attempted to give us a more perfect account than ever was before of Christianity, as it is delivered in the Scriptures, brings us no tidings of any such faith belonging to Christianity, or discovered to us in the Scriptures. Which gives us to understand, that he verily believes there is no such Christian faith; for in some of his numerous pages, (especially p. 101, &c.) where he speaks so much of belief and faith, he might have taken occasion to insert one word about his complete faith of the Gospel."

Though the places above quoted, out of my Reasonableness of Christianity, and the whole tenor of the latter part of it, show the falsehood of what the unmasker here says; yet I will set down one passage more out of it, and then ask our unmasker, when he hath read them, Whether he hath the brow to say again, that "I bring no tidings of any such faith?" My words are, Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 129, "Faith in the promises of God, relying and acquiescing in his word and faithfulness, the Almighty takes well at our hands, as a great mark of homage paid by us, poor frail creatures, to his goodness and truth, as well as to his power and wisdom; and accepts it as an acknowledgment of his peculiar providence and benignity to us. And therefore, our Saviour tells us,

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John xii. 44, 'He that believes on me, believes not on me, but on him that sent me.' The works of nature show his wisdom and power: but it is his peculiar care of mankind, most eminently discovered in his promises to them, that shows his bounty and goodness; and consequently engages their hearts in love and affection to him. This oblation of a heart fixed with dependence and affection on him, is the most acceptable tribute we can pay him, the foundation of true devotion, and life of all religion. What a value he puts on this depending on his word, and resting satisfied on his promises, we have an example in Abraham; whose faith was counted to him for righteousness, as we have before remarked out of Rom. iv. And his relying firmly on the promise of God, without any doubt of its performance, gave him the name of the father of the faithful; and gained him so much favour with the Almighty, that he was called the friend of God, the highest and most glorious title that can be bestowed on a creature!"

The great outcry he makes against me in his two next sections, p. 57—60, as if I intended to introduce ignorance and popery, is to be entertained rather as the noise of a petulant scold, saying the worst things she could think of, than as the arguing of a man of sense or sincerity. All this mighty accusation is grounded upon these falsehoods: That "I make it my great business to beat men off from divine truths; that I cry down all articles of the Christian faith, but one; that I will not suffer men to look into Christianity; that I blast the epistolary writings." I shall add no more to what I have already said about the epistles, but those few words out of my Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 154, "The epistles, resolving doubts, and reforming mistakes, are of great advantage to our knowledge and practice." And, pp. 155, 156, "An explicit belief of what God requires of those, who will enter into, and receive the benefits of the new covenant, is absolutely required. The other parts of divine revelation are objects of faith, and are so to be received. They are truths, whereof

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none, that is once known to be such, [*i. e.* of divine revelation] may, or ought to be disbelieved."

And as for that other saying of his, "That I will not suffer men to look into Christianity:" I desire to know where that Christianity is locked up, which "I will not suffer men to look into." My Christianity, I confess, is contained in the written word of God: and that I am so far from hindering any one to look into, that I every where appeal to it, and have quoted so much of it, that the unmasker complains of being overlaid with it, and tells me it is tedious. "All divine revelation," I say, p. 156, "requires the obedience of faith; and that every one is to receive all the parts of it, with a docility and disposition prepared to embrace and assent to all truths coming from God; and submit his mind to whatever shall appear to him to bear that character." I speak, in the same page, of men's endeavouring to understand it, and of their interpreting one place by another. This, and the whole design of my book, shows, that I think it every Christian's duty to read, search, and study the holy Scriptures; and make this their great business: and yet the good unmasker, in a fit of zeal, displays his throat, and cries out, p. 59, "Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth; judge whether this be not the way to introduce darkness and ignorance into Christendom; whether this be not blinding of men's eyes," &c. for this mighty pathos ends not there. And, all things considered, I know not whether he had not reason, in his want of arguments, this way to pour out his concern. For neither the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, nor the Apostles' Creed, nor any thing else, being with him the faith of a Christian, *i. e.* sufficient to make a Christian, but just his set of fundamental articles (when he himself knows what they be;) in fine, nothing being Christianity but just his system, it is time to cry out, Help, neighbours! hold fast, friends! Knowledge, religion, Christianity is gone, if this be once permitted, that the people should read and understand the Scripture for themselves, as God shall enlighten their understandings in the use of the means; and not be

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forced to depend upon me, and upon my choosing, and my interpretation, for the necessary points they are to believe to make them Christians: if I, the great unmasker, have not the sole power to decree what is, or is not fundamental, and people be not bound to receive it for such, faith and the Gospel are given up; darkness and barbarism will be brought in upon us by this writer's contrivance. For "he is an underhand factor for that communion, which cries up ignorance for the mother of devotion and religion;" *i. e.* in plain English, for popery. For to this, and nothing else, tends all that sputter he makes in the section beforementioned.

I do not think there was ever a more thorough-paced declaimer than our unmasker. He leaves out nothing that he thinks will make an affrighting noise in the ears of his orthodox hearers, though all the blame and censure he pours out upon others, light only on himself. For let me ask this zealous upholder of light and knowledge: Does he think it reasonable, that any one, who is not a Christian, should be suffered to be undisturbed in his parish? Nay, does he think fit that any such should live free from the lash of the magistrate, or from the persecution of the ecclesiastical power? He seems to talk with another air, p. 65. In the next place I ask, Whether any one is a Christian, who has not the faith of a Christian? Thirdly, I ask, Whether he has the faith of a Christian, who does not explicitly believe all the fundamental articles of Christianity? And, to conclude, I ask him, Whether all those that he has set down, are not fundamental necessary articles? When the unmasker has fairly answered these questions, it will be seen who is for popery, and the ignorance and tyranny that accompany it.

The unmasker is for making and imposing articles of faith; but he is for this power in himself. He likes not popery (which is nothing but the tyranny and imposing upon men's understandings, faith, and consciences) in the hands of the old gentleman at Rome: but it would, he thinks, do admirably well in his own hands. And who can blame him for it? Would not

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that be an excellent way to propagate light and knowledge, by tying up all men to a bundle of articles of his own culling? Or rather, to the authority of Christ and his apostles residing in him? For he does not, nor ever will, give us a full view of fundamentals of his Christianity: but, like the church of Rome, to secure our dependence, reserves to himself a power of declaring others, and defining what is matter of faith, as he shall see occasion.

Now, therefore, veil your bonnets to the unmasker, all you that have a mind to be Christians: break not your heads about the Scriptures, to examine what they require of you: submit your faith implicitly to the unmasker; he will understand and find out the necessary points for you to believe. Take them, just so many as he thinks fit to deliver them to you; this is the way to be knowing Christians. But be sure, ask not, Whether those he is pleased to deliver be every one of them fundamental, and all the fundamental articles, necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian? Such a capricious question spoils all, overturns Christianity, which is intrusted to the unmasker's sole keeping, to be dispensed out as he thinks fit. If you refuse an implicit faith to him, he will presently find you have it for the whore of Babylon; he will smell out popery in it immediately: for he has a very shrewd scent, and you will be discovered to be an underhand factor for the church of Rome.

But if the unmasker were such an enemy as he pretends to those factors, I wonder he should, in what he has said concerning the Apostles' Creed, so exactly jump with Knot the Jesuit. If any one doubt of this, I desire him to look into the fourth chapter of Knot's Charity Maintained, and there he will see how well our unmasker and that Jesuit agree in argument; nay, and expressions too. But yet I do not think him so far guilty, as to be employed as an underhand factor for popery. Every body will, I suppose, be ready to pronounce him so far an innocent, as to clear him from that. The cunning of his design goes not beyond the laying out of his preaching oratory, for the setting up his own

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system, and making that the sole Christianity. To that end, he would be glad to have the power of interpreting Scripture, of defining and declaring articles of faith, and imposing them. This, which makes the absolute power of the pope, he would not, I think, establish at Rome; but it is plain he would have it himself, if he could get it, for the support of the Christianity of his system. An implicit faith, if he might have the management of it, and the taking fundamentals upon trust from his authority, would be of excellent use. Such a power, in his hands, would spread truth and knowledge in the world, *i. e.* his own orthodoxy and set of opinions. But if a man differs, nay, questions any thing of that, whether it be absolutely necessary to make one a Christian, it is immediately a contrivance to let in popery, and to bring "darkness and barbarism into the Christian world." But I must tell the innocent unmasker, whether he designs or no, that if his calling his system the only Christianity can bring the world to receive from him articles of faith of his own choosing, as fundamentals necessary to be believed by all men to make them Christians, which Christ and his apostles did not propose to all men to make them Christians; he does only set up popery in another guise, and lay the foundations of ignorance, darkness, and barbarism in the Christian world; for all the ignorance and blindness that popery introduced, was only upon this foundation. And if he does not see this, (as there is reason to excuse his innocence) it would be no hard matter to demonstrate it, if that were at present the question between us. But there are a great many other propositions to be proved by him, before we come to that new matter of debate.

But before I quit these paragraphs, I must go on with our unmasker's account, and desire him to show where it is,

XXV. "That I make it my business to beat men off from taking notice of any divine truths?"

Next, where it is,

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XXVI. That "I cry down all articles of Christian faith but one?"

Next, how it appears,

XXVII. That "I will not suffer mankind to look into Christianity?"

Again, where it is,

XXVIII. That "I labour industriously to keep people in ignorance;" or tell them, that "there is no necessity of knowing any other doctrines of the Bible?"

These, and several others of the like strain, particularly concerning one article and the epistles, (which are his common-places) are to be found in his 59th and 60th pages. And all this out of a presumption, that his system is the only Christianity; and that if men were not pressed and persuaded to receive that, just every article of it, upon pain of damnation, Christianity would be lost: and not to do this, is to promote ignorance, and contemn the Bible. But he fears where no fear is. If his orthodoxy be the truth, and conformable to the Scriptures, the laying the foundation only where our Saviour and his apostles have laid it, will not overturn it. And to show him that it is so, I desire him again to consider what I said in my Vindication, p. 164, 165, which, because I do not remember he any where takes notice of in his reply, I will here offer again to his consideration: "Convince but men of the mission of Jesus Christ; make them but see the truth, simplicity, and reasonableness of what he himself hath taught, and required to be believed by his followers; and you need not doubt, but being once fully persuaded of his doctrine, and the advantages which, all Christians agree, are received by him, such converts will not lay by the Scriptures; but, by a constant reading and study of them, will get all the light they can from this divine revelation, and nourish themselves up in the

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words of faith and good doctrine, as St. Paul speaks to Timothy."

If the reading and study of the Scripture were more pressed than it is, and men were fairly sent to the Bible to find their religion; and not the Bible put into their hands only to find the opinions of their peculiar sect or party; Christendom would have more Christians, and those that are would be more knowing and more in the right than they now are. That which hinders this, is that select bundle of doctrines, which it has pleased every sect to draw out of the Scriptures, or their own inventions, with an omission (and, as our unmasker would say, a contempt) of all the rest. These choice truths (as the unmasker calls his) are to be the standing orthodoxy of that party, from which none of that church must recede, without the forfeiture of their Christianity, and the loss of eternal life. But, whilst the people keep firm to these, they are in the church, and the way to salvation: which, in effect, what is it but to encourage ignorance, laziness, and neglect of the Scriptures? For what need they be at the pains of constantly reading the Bible, or perplex their heads with considering and weighing what is there delivered; when believing as the church believes, or saying after, or not contradicting their domine, or teacher, serves the turn?

Further, I desire it may be considered, what name that mere mock-show, of recommending to men the study of the Scripture, deserves; if, when they read it, they must understand it just as he (that would be, and they are too apt, contrary to the command of Christ, to call, their master) tells them. If they find any thing in the word of God, that leads them into opinions he does not allow; if any thing they meet with in holy writ seems to them to thwart, or shake the received doctrines, the very proposing of their doubts renders them suspected. Reasoning about them, and not acquiescing in whatever is said to them, is interpreted want of due respect and deference to the authority of their spiritual guides; disrepute and censures follow: and if, in pursuance of their own light, they persist in

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what they think the Scripture teaches them, they are turned out of the church, delivered to Satan, and no longer allowed to be Christians. And is thus a sincere and rightly directed study of the Scriptures, that men may understand and profit thereby, encouraged? This is the consequence of men's assuming to themselves a power of declaring fundamentals, *i. e.* of setting up a Christianity of their own making. For how else can they turn men, of as unblamable lives as others of their members, out of the church of Christ (for so they count their communion) for opinions, unless those opinions were concluded inconsistent with Christianity? Thus systems, the invention of men, are turned into so many opposite Gospels; and nothing is truth in each sect, but what suits with them. So that the Scripture serves but like a nose of wax, to be turned and bent, just as may fit the contrary orthodoxies of different societies. For it is these several systems, that to each party are the just standards of truth, and the meaning of the Scripture is to be measured only by them. Whoever relinquishes any of those distinguishing points, immediately ceases to be a Christian.

This is the way that the unmasker would have truth and religion preserved, light and knowledge propagated. But here too the different sects, giving equal authority to their own orthodoxies, will be quits with him. For as far as I can observe, the same genius seems to influence them all, even those who pretend most to freedom, the Socinians themselves. For when it is observed, how positive and eager they are in their disputes; how forward to have their interpretations of Scripture received for authentic, though to others, in several places, they seem very much strained; how impatient they are of contradiction; and with what disrespect and roughness they often treat their opposers: may it not be suspected, that this so visible a warmth in their present circumstances, and zeal for their orthodoxy, would (had they the power) work in them as it does in others? They in their turns would, I fear, be ready with their set of fundamentals; which they would be as forward to

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impose on others, as others have been to impose contrary fundamentals on them.

This is, and always will be, the unavoidable effect of intruding on our Saviour's authority, and requiring more now, as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, than was at first required by our Saviour and his apostles. What else can be expected among Christians, but their tearing, and being torn in pieces, by one another; whilst every sect assumes to itself a power of declaring fundamentals, and severally thus narrow Christianity to their distinct systems? He that has a mind to see how fundamentals come to be framed and fashioned, and upon what motives and considerations they are often taken up, or laid down, according to the humours, interests, or designs of the heads of parties, as if they were things depending on men's pleasure, and to be suited to their convenience; may find an example worth his notice, in the life of Mr. Baxter, part II. p. 197—205.

Whenever men take upon them to go beyond those fundamental articles of Christianity, which are to be found in the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles, where will they stop? Whenever any set of men will require more, as necessary to be believed to make men of their church, *i. e.* in their sense, Christians, than what our Saviour and his apostles proposed to those whom they made Christians, and admitted into the church of Christ; however they may pretend to recommend the Scripture to their people, in effect, no more of it is recommended to them than just comports with what the leaders of that sect have resolved Christianity shall consist in.

It is no wonder, therefore, there is so much ignorance amongst Christians, and so much vain outcry against it; whilst almost every distinct society of Christians magisterially ascribes orthodoxy to a select set of fundamentals, distinct from those proposed in the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles; which, in no one point, must be questioned by any of its communion. By this means their people are never sent to

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the holy Scriptures, that true fountain of light, but hoodwinked: a veil is cast over their eyes, and then they are bid to read their Bible. They must make it all chime to their church's fundamentals, or else they were better let it alone. For if they find any thing there against the received doctrines, though they hold it and express it in the very terms the Holy Ghost has delivered it in, that will not excuse them. Heresy will be their lot, and they shall be treated accordingly. And thus we see how, amongst other good effects, creed-making always has, and always will necessarily produce and propagate ignorance in the world, however each party blame others for it. And therefore I have often wondered to hear men of several churches so heartily exclaim against the implicit faith of the church of Rome; when the same implicit faith is as much practised and required in their own, though not so openly professed, and ingenuously owned there.

In the next section, the unmasker questions the sincerity of mine, and professes the greatness of his concern for the salvation of men's souls. And tells me of my reflection on him upon that account, in my Vindication, p. 165. Answ. I wish he would, for the right information of the reader, every where set down what he has any thing to say to in my book, or my defence of it, and save me the labour of repeating it. My words in that place are, "Some men will not bear that any one should speak of religion, but according to the model that they themselves have made of it. Nay, though he proposes it upon the very terms, and in the very words which our Saviour and his apostles preached it in; yet he shall not escape censures and the severest insinuations. To deviate in the least, or to omit any thing contained in their articles, is heresy, under the most invidious names in fashion; and it is well if he escapes being a downright atheist. Whether this be the way for teachers to make themselves hearkened to, as men in earnest in religion, and really concerned for the salvation of men's souls, I leave them to consider. What success it has had towards persuading men of the truth of Christianity,

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their own complaints of the prevalency of atheism, on the one hand, and the number of Deists on the other, sufficiently show."

I have set down this passage at large, both as a confirmation of what I said but just now; and also to show that the reflection I there made needed some other answer than a bare profession of his "regard to the salvation of men's souls." The assuming an undue authority to his own opinions, and using manifest untruths in the defence of them, I am sure is no mark that the directing men right in the way to salvation is his chief aim. And I wish, that the greater liberties of that sort which he has again taken in his Socinianism unmasked, and which I have so often laid open, had not confirmed that reflection. I should have been glad, that any thing in my book had been fairly controverted and brought to the touch, whether it had, or had not been confuted. The matter of it would have deserved a serious debate (if any had been necessary) in the words of sobriety, and the charitable temper of the Gospel, as I desired in my preface: and that would not have misbecome the unmasker's function. But it did not consist, it seems, with his design. Christian charity would not have allowed those ill-meant conjectures, and groundless censures, which were necessary to his purpose: and therefore he took a shorter course than to confute my book, and thereby convince me and others. He makes it his business to rail at it, and the author of it, that that might be taken for a confutation. For by what he has hitherto done, arguing seems not to be his talent. And thus far, who can but allow his wisdom? But whether it be that "wisdom that is from above; first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy;" I shall leave to other readers to judge.

His saying nothing to that other reflection, which his manner of expressing himself drew from me, would make one suspect it savoured not altogether of the wisdom of the Gospel; nor showed an over-great care of the salvation of souls. My words, Vindication, p. 178, are: "I know not how better to show my care of

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his credit, than by entreating him, that when he takes next in hand such a subject as this, wherein the salvation of souls is concerned, he would treat it a little more seriously, and with a little more candour, lest men should find in his writings another cause of atheism, which in this treatise he has not thought fit to mention. Ostentation of wit in general, he has made a cause of atheism, p. 28. But the world will tell him, that frothy light discourses, concerning the serious matters of religion, and ostentation of trifling misbecoming wit, in those who come as ambassadors from God, under the title of successors of the apostles, in the great commission of the Gospel, are none of the least causes of atheism." But this advice, I am now satisfied, (by his second part of the same strain) was very improper for him; and no more reasonable, than if one should advise a buffoon to talk gravely, who has nothing left to draw attention, if he should lay by his scurrility.

The remainder of this fourth chapter, p. 61—67, being spent in showing why the Socinians are for a few articles of faith, being a matter that I am not concerned in, I leave to that forward gentleman to examine, who examined Mr. Edwards's exceptions against the Reasonableness of Christianity; and who, as the unmasker informs me, page 64, was chosen to vindicate my attempt, &c.

If the unmasker knows that he was so chosen, it is well. If I had known of such a choice, I should have desired that somebody should have been chosen to vindicate my attempt, who had understood it better. The unmasker and examiner are each of them so full of themselves, and their own systems, that I think they may be a fit match one for another: and so I leave these cocks of the game to try it out in an endless battle of wrangling (till death them part) which of them has made the true and exact collection of fundamentals; and whose system of the two ought to be the prevailing orthodoxy, and be received for Scripture. Only I warn the examiner to look to himself: for the unmasker has the

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whip hand of him, and gives him to understand, p. 65, that if he cannot do it himself by the strength of his lungs, the vehemency of his oratory, and endless attacks of his repetitions; the ecclesiastical power, and the civil magistrate's lash, have, in store, demonstrative arguments to convince him, that his [the unmasker's] system is the only true Christianity.

By the way, I must not forget to mind the unmasker here again, that he hath a very unlucky hand at guessing. For whereas he names Socinus, as one from whom I received my platform, and says that "Crellius gave me my cue;" it so falls out, that they are two authors of whom I never read a page. I say not this, as if I thought it a fault if I had; for I think I should have much better spent my time in them, than in the writings of our learned unmasker.

I was sure there was no offending the unmasker, without the guilt of atheism; only he here, p. 69, very mercifully lays it upon my book, and not upon my design. The "tendency of it to irreligion and atheism," he has proved in an eloquent harangue, for he is such an orator he cannot stir a foot without a speech (made) as he bids us suppose, by the atheistical rabble. And who can deny, but he has chosen a fit employment for himself? Where could there be found a better speech-maker for the atheistical rabble? But let us hear him: for though he would give the atheistical rabble the credit of it, yet it is the unmasker speaks. And because it is a pity such a pattern of rhetoric and reason should be lost, I have, for my reader's edification, set it all down verbatim:

"We are beholden to this worthy adventurer for ridding the world of so great an incumbrance, viz. that huge mass and unwieldy body of Christianity, which took up so much room. Now we see that it was this bulk, and not that of mankind, which he had an eye to, when he so often mentioned this latter. This is a physician for our turn, indeed; we like this chymical operator, that doth not trouble us with a parcel of heavy drugs of no value, but contracts it all into a few spirits,

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nay doth his business with a single drop. We have been in bondage a long time to creeds and catechisms, systems and confessions; we have been plagued with a tedious bead-roll of articles, which our reverend divines have told us we must make the matter of our faith. Yea, so it is, both conformists and nonconformists (though disagreeing in some other things) have agreed in this, to molest and crucify us. But this noble writer (we thank him) hath set us free, and eased us by bringing down all the Christian faith into one point. We have heard some men talk of epistolary composures of the New Testament, as if great matters were contained in them, as if the great mysteries of Christianity (as they call them) were unfolded there: but we could never make any thing of them; and now we find that this writer is partly of our opinion. He tells us, that these are letters sent upon occasion; but we are not to look for our religion (for now, for this gentleman's sake, we begin to talk of religion) in these places. We believe it, and we believe that there is no religion but in those very chapters and verses which he has set down in his treatise. What need we have any other part of the New Testament? That is Bible enough, if not too much. Happy, thrice happy shall this author be perpetually esteemed by us; we will chronicle him as our friend and benefactor. It is not our way to saint people, otherwise we would certainly canonize this gentleman; and when our hand is in, his pair of booksellers, for their being so beneficial to the world, in publishing so rich a treasure. It was a blessed day, when this hopeful birth saw the light; for hereby all the orthodox creed-makers and systematic men are ruined for ever. In brief, if we be for any Christianity, it shall be this author's: for that agrees with us singularly well, it being so short, all couched in four words, neither more nor less. It is a very fine compendium, and we are infinitely obliged to this great reformer for it. We are glad at heart, that Christianity is brought so low by this worthy penman; for this is a good presage, that it will dwindle into nothing. What! but one article, and that so brief too! We like

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such a faith, and such a religion, because it is nearer to none."

He hath no sooner done, but, as it deserved, he cries out "*Euge, sophos!* And is not the reader," quoth he, "satisfied that such language as this hath real truth in it? Does not he perceive, that the discarding all the articles but one, makes way for the casting off that too?" Answ. It is but supposing that the reader is a civil gentleman, and answers, Yes, to these two questions; and then it is demonstration, that by this speech he has irrefragably proved the tendency of my book to irreligion and atheism.

I remember Chillingworth somewhere puts up this request to his adversary Knot: "Sir, I beseech you, when you write again, do us the favour to write nothing but syllogisms. For I find it still an extreme trouble to find out the concealed propositions, which are to connect the parts of your enthymems. As now, for example, I profess to you I have done my best endeavour to find some glue, or solder, or cement, or thread, or any thing to tie the antecedent and this consequent together." The unmasker agrees so much in a great part of his opinion with that Jesuit, (as I have shown already) and does so infinitely outdo him in spinning ropes of sand, and a coarse thread of inconsistencies, which runs quite through his book; that it is with great justice I put him here in the Jesuit's place, and address the same request to him.

His very next words give me a fresh reason to do it: for thus he argues, p. 72, "May we not expect, that those who deal thus with the Creed, *i. e.* discard all the articles of it but one, will use the same method in reducing the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, abbreviate the former into one precept, and the latter into one petition?" Answ. If he will tell me where this creed he speaks of is, it will be much more easy to answer his demand. Whilst his creed, which he here speaks of, is yet nowhere, it is ridiculous for him to ask questions about it. The Ten Commandments, and the Lord's Prayer, I know where to find in express words, set down by themselves, with peculiar

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marks of distinction. Which is the Lord's Prayer, we are plainly taught by this command of our Saviour, Luke xi. 2, "When ye pray, say, Our Father," &c. In the same manner and words, we are taught what we should believe, to make us his disciples, by his command to the apostles what they should preach, Matth. x. 7, "As ye go, preach, saying," (What were they to say? Only this) "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Or, as St. Luke expresses it, chap. ix. 2, They were sent to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick:" which, what it was, we have sufficiently explained. But this creed of the unmasker, which he talks of, where is it? Let him show it us distinctly set out from the rest of the Scripture. If he knows where it is, let him produce it, or leave talking of it, until he can. It is not the Apostles' Creed, that is evident: for that creed he has discarded from being the standard of Christian faith, and has told the world in words at length, That "if a man believes no more than is in express terms in the Apostles' Creed, his faith will not be the faith of a Christian." Nay, it is plain, that creed has, in the unmasker's opinion, the same tendency to atheism and irreligion, that my summary has. For the Apostles' Creed, reducing the forty, or perhaps, the four hundred fundamental articles of his Christian creed, to twelve; and leaving out the greatest part of those necessary ones, which he has already, and will hereafter, in good time, give us; does as much dispose men to serve the decalogue and the Lord's Prayer just so, as my reducing those twelve to two. For so many, at least, he has granted to be in my summary, viz. the article of one God, maker of heaven and earth; and the other, of Jesus the Messiah; though he every where calls them but one: which, whether it be to show with what love and regard to truth he continues, and consequently began this controversy; or whether it be to beguile and startle unwary, or confirm prejudiced readers; I shall leave others to judge. It is evident, he thinks his cause would be mightily maimed, if he were forced to leave out the charge of one article; and he would not know what to do for wit or argument, if he should

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call them two: for then the whole weight and edge of his strong and sharp reasoning, in his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, p. 122, would be lost. There you have it in these words: "When the catholic faith is thus brought down to one single article, it will soon be reduced to none; the unit will dwindle into a cypher." And here again, it makes the whole argument of his atheistical speech, which he winds up with these convincing words: "We are glad to hear that Christianity is brought so low by this worthy penman; for this is a good presage, that it will dwindle into nothing. What! one article, and that so brief too! We like such a faith, and such a religion, because it is so near none." But I must tell this writer, of equal wit, sense, and modesty, that this religion, which he thus makes a dull farce of, and calls "near none," is that very religion which our Saviour Jesus Christ and his apostles preached, for the conversion and salvation of mankind; no one article whereof, which they proposed as necessary to be received by unbelievers, to make them Christians, is omitted. And I ask him, Whether it be his errand, as one of our Saviour's ambassadors, to turn it thus into ridicule? For, until he has shown, that they preached otherwise, and more than what the Spirit of truth has recorded of their preaching in their histories, which I have faithfully collected, and set down; all that he shall say, reflecting upon the plainness and simplicity of their doctrine, however directed against me, will by his atheistical rabble of all kinds, now they are so well entered and instructed in it by him, be all turned upon our Saviour and his apostles.

What tendency this, and all his other trifling, in so serious a cause as this is, has to the propagating of atheism and irreligion in this age, he were best to consider. This I am sure, the doctrine of but one article (if the author and finisher of our faith, and those he guided by his Spirit, had preached but one article) has no more tendency to atheism, than their doctrine of one God. But the unmasker every where talks, as if the strength of our religion lay in the number of its articles; and would be presently routed, if it had been

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but a few; and therefore he has mustered up a pretty full band of them, and has a reserve of the Lord knows how many more, which shall be forth coming upon occasion. But I shall desire to remind this learned divine, who is so afraid of what will become of his religion, if it should propose but one or a few articles, as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian; that the strength and security of our religion lies in the divine authority of those who first promulgated the terms of admittance into the church, and not in the multitude of articles, supposed by some necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian: and I would have him remember, when he goes next to make use of this strong argument of "one dwindling into a cypher," that one is as remote as a million from none. And if this be not so, I desire to know whether his way of arguing will not prove pagan polytheism to be more remote from atheism than Christianity. He will do well to try the force of his speech in the mouth of an heathen, complaining of the tendency of Christianity to atheism, by reducing his great number of gods to but one, which was so near none, and would, therefore, soon be reduced to none.

The unmasker seems to be upon the same topic, where he so pathetically complains of the Socinians, p. 66, in these words: "Is it not enough to rob us of our God, by denying Christ to be so; but must they spoil us of all the other articles of Christian faith but one?" Have a better heart, good sir; for I assure you nobody can rob you of your God, but by your own consent, nor spoil you of any of the articles of your faith. If you look for them, where God has placed them, in the holy Scripture, and take them as he has framed and fashioned them there; there you will always find them safe and sound. But if they come out of an artificer's shop, and be of human invention, I cannot answer for them: they may, for aught I know, be nothing but an idol of your own setting up, which may be pulled down, should you cry out ever so much, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!"

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He who considers this argument of one and none, as managed by the unmasker, and observes his pathetical way of reasoning all through his book, must confess that he has got the very philosopher's stone in disputing. That which would be worthless lead in others, he turns into pure gold; his oratory changes its nature, and gives it the noble tincture: so that what, in plain reasoning, would be nonsense, let him but put it into a speech, or an exclamation, and there it becomes strong argument. Whether this be not so, I desire mode and figure may decide. And to those I shall desire he would reduce the proofs, which, p. 73, he says he has given of these following propositions, viz.

XXIX. "That I have corrupted men's minds."

XXX. "That I have depraved the Gospel."

XXXI. "That I have abused Christianity."

For all these three, p. 73, he affirms of me without proof, and without honesty.

Whether it be from confusion of thought, or unfairness of design; either because he has not clear distinct notions of what he would say, or finds it not to his purpose to speak them clearly out, or both together; so it is, that the unmasker very seldom, but when he rails, delivers himself so that one can certainly tell what he would have.

The question is, What is absolutely necessary to be believed by every one, to make him a Christian? It has been clearly made out, from an exact survey of the history of our Saviour and his apostles, that the whole aim of all their preaching every where was, to convince the unbelieving world of these two great truths; first, That there was one, eternal, invisible God, maker of heaven and earth: and next, that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, the promised King and Saviour: and that, upon men's believing these two articles, they were baptized and admitted into the church, *i. e.* received

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as subjects of Christ's kingdom, and pronounced believers. From whence it unavoidably follows, that these two are the only truths necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian.

This matter of fact is so evident from the whole tenour of the four Gospels and the Acts, and presses so hard, that the unmasker, who contends for a great number of other points necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, thinks himself concerned to give some answer to it; but, in his usual way, full of uncertainty and confusion. To clear this matter, he lays down four particulars: the first is, p. 74, "That the believing Jesus to be the promised Messiah was the first step to Christianity."

The second, p. 76, "That though this one proposition, (viz. of Jesus the Messiah) be mentioned alone in some places, yet there is reason to think, and be persuaded, that at the same time other matters of faith were proposed."

The third, p. 76, "That though there are several parts and members of the Christian faith, yet they do not all occur in any one place of Scripture."

The fourth, p. 78, "That Christianity was erected by degrees."

These particulars he tells us, p. 74, "he offers to clear an objection." To see, therefore, whether they are pertinent or no, we must examine what the objection is, as he puts it. I think it might have been put in a few words: this I am sure, it ought to have been put very clear and distinct. But the unmasker has been pleased to give it us, p. 73, as followeth: "Because I designed these papers for the satisfying of the reader's doubts, about any thing occurring, concerning the matter before us, and for the establishing of his wavering mind; I will here (before I pass to the second general head of my discourse) answer a query, or objection, which some, and not without some show of ground, may be apt to start: how comes it to pass, they will say, that this article of faith, viz. that Jesus is the Messiah, or Christ, is so often repeated in the New Testament? Why is this sometimes urged, without the mentioning

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of any other article of belief? Doth not this plainly show, that this is all that is required to be believed, as necessary to make a man a Christian? May we not infer, from the frequent and sole repetition of this article in several places of the evangelists and the Acts, that there is no other point of faith of absolute necessity; but that this alone is sufficient to constitute a man a true member of Christ?"

By which he shows, that he is uncertain which way to put the objection, so as may be easiest to get rid of it: and therefore he has turned it several ways, and put several questions about it. As, first,

"Why this article of faith," viz. that Jesus is the Messiah, "is so often repeated in the New Testament?"

His next question is, "Why is this sometimes urged without the mentioning any other article of belief?" which supposes, that sometimes other articles of belief are mentioned with it.

The third question is, "May we not infer, from the frequent and sole repetition of this article, in several places of the evangelists and Acts?"

Which last question is in effect, Why is this so frequently and alone repeated in the evangelists and the Acts? *i. e.* in the preachings of our Saviour and his Apostles to unbelievers. For of that he must give an account, if he will remove the difficulty. Which three, though put as one, yet are three as distinct questions, and demand a reason for three as distinct matters of fact, as these three are, viz. frequently proposed: sometimes proposed alone; and always proposed alone, in the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles: for so in truth it was, all through the Gospels and the Acts, to the unconverted believers of one God alone.

These three questions being thus jumbled together in one objection, let us see how the four particulars, he mentions, will account for them.

The first of them is this: "That believing Jesus to be the promised Messias," was, says he, "the first step to Christianity." Let it be so: What do you infer from thence? The next words show: "therefore this,

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rather than any other article, was propounded to be believed by all those, whom either our Saviour or his apostles invited to embrace Christianity." Let your premises be ever so true, and your deduction of this proposition be ever so regular from them, it is all lost labour. This conclusion is not the proposition you were to prove. Your questions were, "Why this article is so often proposed?" And in those frequent repetitions, "Why sometimes urged alone, and why always proposed alone, viz. to those whom either our Saviour or his apostles invited to embrace Christianity?" And your answer is, Because the believing "Jesus to be the Messias, was the first step to Christianity." This, therefore, remains upon you to be proved:

XXXII. "That, because the believing Jesus to be the Messias is the first step to Christianity, therefore this article is frequently proposed in the New Testament, is sometimes proposed without the mentioning any other article, and always alone to unbelievers."

And when you have proved this, I shall desire you to apply it to our present controversy.

His next answer to those questions is in these words, p. 76, "That though this one proposition, or article, be mentioned alone in some places, yet there is reason to think, and be persuaded, that at the same time other matters of faith were proposed." From whence it lies upon him to make out this reasoning, viz.

XXXIII. "That because there is reason to think, and be persuaded, that at the same time that this one article was mentioned alone, (as it was sometimes) other matters of faith were proposed: therefore this article was often proposed in the New Testament; sometimes proposed alone; and always proposed alone, in the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles to unbelievers."

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This I set down to show the force of his answer to his questions: supposing it to be true, not that I grant it to be true, that where "this one article is mentioned alone, we have reason to think, and be persuaded, that at the same time other matters of faith [*i. e.* articles of faith necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian] were proposed:" and I doubt not but to show the contrary.

His third particular, in answer to the question proposed in his objection, stands thus, p. 76: "That though there are several parts and members of the Christian faith, yet they do not all occur in any one place of the Scripture;" which answer lays it upon him to prove,

XXXIV. That because "the several parts of the members of the Christian faith do not all occur in any one place of Scripture," therefore this article, that Jesus was the "Messias, was often proposed in the New Testament, sometimes proposed alone, and always proposed alone," in the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles, through the history of the evangelists and the Acts.

The fourth and last particular, which he tells us is the main answer to the objection, is in these words, page 78,

"That Christianity was erected by degrees."

Which requires him to make out his argument, viz.

XXXV. "That because Christianity was erected by degrees," therefore this article, "that Jesus was the Messias, was often proposed in the New Testament, sometimes proposed alone, and always proposed alone in the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles to unbelievers, recorded in the history of the evangelists and Acts."

For, as I said before, in these three questions he has put his objection; to which, he tells us, this is the main answer.

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Of these four particulars it is, that he says, p. 74, "to clear this objection, and to give a full and satisfactory answer to all doubts in this affair, I offer these ensuing particulars, which will lead the reader to the right understanding of the whole case."

How well they have cleared the objection, may be seen by barely setting them down as answers to the questions, wherein he puts the objection.

This is all I have hitherto done; whereby is very visible, how well (supposing them true) they clear the objection: and how pertinently they are brought to answer those questions wherein his objection is contained. Perhaps it will be said, that neither these, nor any thing else, can be an apposite answer to those questions put so together. I answer, I am of the same mind. But if the unmasker, through ignorance or shuffling, will talk thus confusedly, he must answer for it. He calls all his three questions, one objection, over and over again: and therefore, which of those questions it does or does not lie in, I shall not trouble myself to divine; since I think he himself cannot tell: for whichever he takes of them, it will involve him in equal difficulties. I now proceed to examine his particulars themselves, and the truth contained in them. The first, p. 74, stands thus:

1. "The believing of Jesus to be the promised Messias was the first step to Christianity. It was that which made way for the embracing of all the other articles, a passage to all the rest." Answ. If this be, as he would have it, only the leading article, amongst a great many other, equally necessary to be believed, to make a man a Christian; this is a reason why it should be constantly preached in the first place: but this is no reason why this alone should be so often repeated, and the other necessary points not be once mentioned. For I desire to know what those other articles are that, in the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, are repeated or urged besides this?

In the next place, if it be true, that this article, viz. that Jesus is the Messiah, was only the first in order amongst a great many articles, as necessary to be be-

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lieved; how comes it to pass, that barely upon the proposal and believing of this, men were admitted into the church as believers? The history of the New Testament is full of instances of this, as Acts viii. 5, 12, 13. ix. and in other places.

Though it be true, what the unmasker says here, "That if they did not give credit to this in the first place, that Jesus of Nazareth was that eminent and extraordinary person prophesied of long before, and that he was sent and commissioned by God; there could be no hope that they would attend to any other proposals, relating to the Christian religion;" yet what he subjoins, "that this is the true reason, why that article was constantly propounded to be believed by all that looked towards Christianity, and why it is mentioned so often in the evangelical writings," is not true. For, first, this supposes that there were other articles joined with it. This he should have first proved, and then given the reason for it; and not, as he does here, suppose what is in question, and then give a reason why it is so; and such a reason that is inconsistent with the matter of fact, that is every where recorded in holy writ. For if the true reason why the preaching of this article, "that Jesus was the Messiah," as it is recorded in the history of the New Testament, were only to make way for the other articles, one must needs think, that either our Saviour and his apostles (with reverence be it spoken) were very strange preachers; or, that the evangelists, and author of the Acts, were very strange historians. The first were to instruct the world in a new religion, consisting of a great number of articles, says the unmasker, necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, *i. e.* a great number of propositions, making a large system, every one whereof is so necessary for a man to understand and believe, that if any one be omitted, he cannot be of that religion. What now did our Saviour and his apostles do? Why, if the unmasker may be believed, they went up and down with danger of their lives, and preached to the world. What did they preach? Even this single proposition to make way for the rest, viz. "This

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is the eminent man sent from God," to teach you other things: which amounts to no more but this, that Jesus was the person which was to teach them the true religion, but that true religion itself is not to be found in all their preaching; nay, scarce a word of it. Can there be any thing more ridiculous than this? And yet this was all they preached, if it be true, that this was all they meant by the preaching every where, Jesus to be the Messiah, and if it were only an introduction, and a making way for the doctrines of the Gospel. But it is plain, it was called the Gospel itself. Let the unmasker, as a true successor of the apostles, go and preach the Gospel, as the apostles did, to some part of the heathen world, where the name of Christ is not known: would not he himself, and every body think, he was very foolishly employed, if he should tell them nothing but this, that Jesus was the person promised and sent from God to reveal the true religion; but should teach them nothing of that true religion, but this preliminary article? Such the unmasker makes all the preaching, recorded in the New Testament, for the conversion of the unbelieving world. He makes the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles to be no more but this, that the great prophet promised to the world was come, and that Jesus was he: but what his doctrine was, that they were silent in, and taught not one article of it. But the unmasker misrepresents it: for as to his accusing the historians, the evangelists, and writers of the Acts of the apostles, for their shameful omission of the whole doctrine of the Christian religion, to save his hypothesis, as he does under his next head, in these words: "that though this one proposition be mentioned alone in some places, yet there is reason to think, and be persuaded, that at the same time other matters of faith were proposed;" I shall show how bold he makes with those inspired historians, when I come to consider that particular.

How ridiculous, how senseless, this bold unmasker, and reformer of the history of the New Testament, makes the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, as it stands recorded of them by infallible writers, is visible.

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But taking it, as in truth it is there, we shall have a quite other view of it. Our Saviour preached every where the kingdom of God; and by his miracles declared himself to be the king of that kingdom. The apostles preached the same, and after his ascension, openly avowed him to be the Prince and Saviour promised: but preached not this as a bare speculative article of simple belief; but that men might receive him for their King, and become his subjects. When they told the world that he was the Christ, it was not as the unmasker will have it: believe this man to be a prophet, and then he will teach you his new religion; which, when you have received and embraced all and every article thereof, which are a great number, you will then be Christians, if you be not ignorant or incredulous of any of them. But it was, believe this man to be your King sent from God; take him for such, with a resolution to observe the laws he has given you; and you are his subjects, you are Christians. For those that truly did so, made themselves his subjects: and to continue so, there was no more required, than a sincere endeavour to know his will in all things, and to obey it. Such a preaching as this, of Jesus to be the Messiah, the King and Deliverer, that God Almighty had promised to mankind, and now had effectually sent to be their Prince and Ruler, was not a simple preparation to the Gospel: but, when received with the obedience of faith, was the very receiving of the Gospel, and had all that was requisite to make men Christians. And without it be so understood, nobody can clear the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles from that incredible imperfection, or their historians from that unpardonable negligence, and not doing either what they ought, or what they undertook, which our unmasker hath so impiously charged upon them; as will appear yet plainer in what I have to say to the unmasker's next particular. For, as to the remainder of this paragraph, it contains nothing but his censure and contempt of me, for not being of his mind, for not seeing as he sees, *i. e.* in effect, not laying that blame which he does, either on the preaching of our Saviour

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and his apostles, or on the inspired writings of their historians, to make them comply with his system, and the Christianity he would make.

The unmasker's second particular, p. 76, tells us, "That though this one proposition or article be mentioned alone in some places, yet there is reason to think and be persuaded, that at the same time other matters of faith were proposed. For it is confessed by all intelligent and observing men, that the history of the Scripture is concise; and that in relating matter of fact, many passages are omitted by the sacred penmen. Wherefore, though but this one article of belief, (because it is a leading one, and makes way for the rest) be expressly mentioned in some of the Gospels, yet we must not conclude thence, that no other matter of faith was required to be admitted of. For things are briefly set down in the evangelical records, and we must suppose many things which are not in direct terms related."

Answ. The unmasker here keeps to his usual custom of speaking in doubtful terms. He says, that where this one article, that Jesus is the Messiah, is alone recorded in the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles; "We have reason to be persuaded, that at the same time other matters of faith were proposed." If this be to his purpose, by matters of faith, must be meant fundamental articles of faith, absolutely necessary to be believed by every man to make him a Christian. That such matters of faith are omitted, in the history of the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, by the sacred historians; this, he says, "we have reason to be persuaded of."

Answ. They need be good reasons to persuade a rational man, that the evangelists, in their history of our Saviour and his apostles, (if they were but ordinarily fair and prudent men) did, in a history published to instruct the world in a new religion, leave out the necessary and fundamental parts of that religion. But let them be considered as inspired writers, under the conduct of the infallible Spirit of God, putting them upon, and directing them in, the writing of this history of the

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Gospel: and then it is impossible for any Christian, but the unmasker, to think, that they made any such gross omissions, contrary to the design of their writing, without a demonstration to convince him of it. Now all the reason that our unmasker gives, is this: "That it is confessed by all intelligent and observing men, that the history of the Scripture is concise; and that in relating matters of fact, many passages are omitted by the sacred penmen."

Answ. The unmasker might have spared the confession of intelligent and observing men, after so plain a declaration of St. John himself, chap. xx. 31, "Many other things did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book." And again, xxi. 25, "There are also many other things that Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose the world could not contain the books that should be written." There needs, therefore, no opinion of intelligent and observing men to convince us, that the history of the Gospel is so far concise, that a great many matters of fact are omitted, and a great many less material circumstances, even of those that are set down. But will any intelligent or observing man, any one that bears the name of a Christian, have the impudence to say, that the inspired writers, in the relation they give us of what Christ and his apostles preached to unbelievers to convert them to the faith, omitted the fundamental articles which those preachers proposed to make men Christians; and without a belief of which they could not be Christians?

The unmasker talks after his wonted fashion; *i. e.* seems to say something, which, when examined, proves nothing to his purpose. He tells us, "That in some places," where the article of "Jesus the Messiah is mentioned alone, at the same time other matters of faith were proposed." I ask were these other matters of faith all the unmasker's necessary articles? If not, what are those other matters of faith to the unmasker's purpose? As for example, in St. Peter's sermon, Acts ii. "Other matters of faith were proposed with the article of Jesus the Messiah." But what does this

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make for his fundamental articles: were they all proposed with the article of Jesus the Messiah? If not, unbelievers were converted, and brought into the church, without the unmasker's necessary articles. Three thousand were added to the church by this one sermon. I pass by, now, St. Luke's not mentioning a syllable of the greatest part of the unmasker's necessary articles; and shall consider only, how long that sermon may have been. It is plain from ver. 15, that it began not until about nine in the morning; and from ver. 41, that before night, three thousand were converted and baptized. Now I ask the unmasker, Whether so small a number of hours, as Peter must necessarily employ in preaching to them, were sufficient to instruct such a mixed multitude so fully in all those articles, which he has proposed as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian; as that every one of those three thousand, that were that day baptized, did understand, and explicitly believe every one of those his articles, just in the sense of our unmasker's system? Not to mention those remaining articles, which the unmasker will not be able, in twice as many months, to find and declare to us.

He says, "That in some places," where the article of "Jesus the Messiah is mentioned alone, at the same time other matters of faith were proposed." Let us take this to be so at present, yet this helps not the unmasker's case. The fundamental articles, that were proposed by our Saviour and his apostles, necessary to be believed to make men Christians, are not set down; but only this single one, of "Jesus the Messiah:" therefore, will any one dare to say they are omitted every where by the evangelists? Did the historians of the Gospel make their relation so concise and short, that giving an account in so many places of the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, for the conversion of the unbelieving world, they did not in any one place, nor in all of them together, set down the necessary points of that faith, which their unbelieving hearers were converted to? If they did not, how can their histories be called the Gospels of Jesus Christ? Or how can they

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serve to the end for which they were written? Which was to publish to the world the doctrine of Jesus Christ, that men might be brought into his religion. Now I challenge the unmasker to show me, not out of any one place, but out of all the preachings of our Saviour and his apostles, recorded in the four Gospels, and in the Acts, all those propositions which he has reckoned up as fundamental articles of faith. If they are not to be found there, it is plain, that either they are not articles of faith, necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian; or else, that those inspired writers have given us an account of the Gospel, or Christian religion, wherein the greatest part of the doctrines necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, are wholly omitted. Which in short is to say, that the Christianity, which is recorded in the Gospels and the Acts, is not that Christianity which is sufficient to make a man a Christian. This (as absurd and impious as it is) is what our unmasker charges upon the conciseness (as he is pleased to call it) of the evangelical history. And this we must take upon his word, though these inspired writers tell us the direct contrary: for St. Luke, in his preface to his Gospel, tells Theophilus, that having a perfect knowledge of all things, the design of his writing was to set them in order, that he might know the certainty of those things that were believed amongst Christians. And his history of the Acts begins thus: "The former treatise [*i. e.* his Gospel] have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began to do and to teach." So that, how concise soever the unmasker will have his history to be, he professes it to contain all that Jesus taught. Which all must, in the narrowest sense that can be given it, contain at least all things necessary to make a man a Christian. It would else be a very lame and imperfect history of all that Jesus taught, if the faith contained in it were not sufficient to make a man a Christian. This indeed, as the unmasker hath been pleased to term it, would be a very lank faith, a very lank Gospel.

St. John also says thus, of his history of the Gospel, chap. xx. 30, 31, "Many other signs truly did Jesus,

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in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:" so far his history is, by his own confession, concise. "But these," says he, "are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God; and that, believing, ye might have life through his name." As concise as it was, there was yet (if the apostle's word may be taken for it against the unmasker's) enough contained in his Gospel, for the procuring of eternal life, to those who believed it. And, whether it was that one article that he there sets down, viz. That Jesus was the Messiah, or that set of articles which the unmasker gives us, I shall leave to this modern divine to resolve. And, if he thinks still, that all the articles he has set down in his roll, are necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, I must desire him to show them to me in St. John's Gospel, or else to convince the world that St. John was mistaken, when he said, that he had written his Gospel, that men might believe that "Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God; and that, believing, they might have life through his name."

So that, granting the history of the Scripture to be so concise, as the unmasker would have it, viz. that in some places the infallible writers, recording the discourses of our Saviour and his apostles, omitted all the other fundamental articles proposed by them to be believed to make men Christians, but this one, that Jesus was the Messiah; yet this will not remove the objection that lies against his other fundamentals, which are not to be found in the histories of the four evangelists; nay, not to be found in any one of them. If every one of them contains the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and consequently all things necessary to salvation, whether this will not be a new ground of accusation against me, and give the unmasker a right to charge me with laying by three of the Gospels with contempt, as well as he did before charge me with a contempt of the epistles; must be left to his sovereign authority to determine.

Having showed that, allowing all he says here to be as he would have it, yet it clears not the objection that lies against his fundamentals; I shall now examine

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what truth there is in what he here pretends, viz. that though the one article, That Jesus is the Messiah, be mentioned "alone in some places, yet we have reason to be persuaded, from the conciseness of the" Scripture history, that there were, at the same time, joined with it other necessary articles of faith, in the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles.

It is to be observed, that the unmasker builds upon this false supposition, that in some places, other necessary articles of faith, joined with that of Jesus the Messiah, are by the evangelists mentioned to be proposed by our Saviour and his apostles, as necessary to be believed to make those they preached to Christians. For his saying, that in some places, that "one necessary article is mentioned alone," implies, that in other places it is not mentioned alone, but joined with other necessary articles. But then it will remain upon him to show,

XXXVI. "In what place, either of the Gospels or of the Acts, other articles of faith are joined with this, and proposed as necessary to be believed to make men Christians."

The unmasker, it is probable, will tell us, that the article of Christ's resurrection is sometimes joined with this of the Messiah, as particularly in that first sermon of St. Peter, Acts ii. by which there were three thousand added to the church at one time. Answ. This sermon, well considered, will explain to us both the preaching of the apostles; what it was that they proposed to their unbelieving auditors, to make them Christians; and also the manner of St. Luke's recording their sermons. It is true, that here are delivered by St. Peter many other matters of faith, besides that of Jesus being the Messiah: for all that he said, being of divine authority, is matter of faith, and may not be disbelieved. The first part of his discourse is to prove to the Jews, that what they had observed of extraordinary at that time, amongst the disciples, who spake variety of tongues, did not proceed from wine, but from the Holy

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Ghost; and that this was the pouring out of the Spirit, prophesied of by the prophet Joel. This is all matter of faith, and is written, that it might be believed: but yet I think, that neither the unmasker nor any body else will say, that this is such a necessary article of faith, that no man could, without an explicit belief of it, be a Christian; though, being a declaration of the Holy Ghost by St. Peter, it is so much a matter of faith, that nobody, to whom it is now proposed, can deny it, and be a Christian. And thus all the Scripture of the New Testament, given by divine inspiration, is matter of faith, and necessary to be believed by all Christians, to whom it is proposed. But yet I do not think any one so unreasonable as to say, that every proposition in the New Testament is a fundamental article of faith, which is required explicitly to be believed to make a man a Christian.

Here now is a matter of faith joined, in the same sermon, with this fundamental article, that "Jesus is the Messiah;" and reported by the sacred historian so at large, that it takes up a third part of St. Peter's sermon, recorded by St. Luke: and yet it is such a matter of faith, as is not contained in the unmasker's catalogue of necessary articles. I must ask him then, whether St. Luke were so concise an historian, that he would so at large set down a matter of faith, proposed by St. Peter, that was not necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, and wholly leave out the very mention of all the unmasker's additional necessary articles, if indeed they were necessary to be believed to make men Christians? I know not how any one could charge the historian with greater unfaithfulness, or greater folly. But this the unmasker sticks not at, to preserve to himself the power of appointing what shall, and what shall not, be necessary articles; and of making his system the Christianity necessary, and only necessary to be received.

The next thing that St. Peter proceeds to, in this his sermon, is to declare to the unbelieving Jews that Jesus of Nazareth, who had done miracles amongst them,

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whom they had crucified, and put to death, and whom God had raised again from the dead, was the Messiah.

Here indeed our Saviour's crucifixion, death, and resurrection, are mentioned: and if they were nowhere else recorded, are matters of faith; which, with all the rest of the New Testament, ought to be believed by every Christian, to whom it is thus proposed, as a part of divine revelation. But that these were not here proposed to the unbelieving Jews, as the fundamental articles, which St. Peter principally aimed at, and endeavoured to convince them of, is evident from hence, that they are made use of as arguments to persuade them of this fundamental truth, viz. that Jesus was the Messiah, whom they ought to take for their Lord and Ruler. For whatsoever is brought as an argument to prove another truth, cannot be thought to be the principal thing aimed at, in that argumentation; though it may have so strong and immediate a connexion with the conclusion, that you cannot deny it, without denying even what is inferred from it, and is therefore the fitter to be an argument to prove it. But that our Saviour's crucifixion, death, and resurrection, were used here as arguments to persuade them into a belief of this fundamental article, that Jesus was the Messiah, and not as propositions of a new faith they were to receive, is evident from hence, that St. Peter preached here to those who knew the death and crucifixion of Jesus as well as he: and therefore these could not be proposed to them, as new articles of faith to be believed; but those matters of fact being what the Jews knew already, were a good argument, joined with his resurrection, to convince them of that truth, which he endeavoured to give them a belief of. And therefore he rightly inferred, from these facts joined together, this conclusion, the believing whereof would make them Christians: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, Lord and Christ." To the making good this sole proposition, his whole discourse tended: this was the sole truth he laboured to convince them of; this the

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faith he endeavoured to bring them into; which as soon as they had received with repentance, they were by baptism admitted into the church, and three thousand at once were made Christians.

Here St. Luke's own confession, without that "of intelligent and observing men," which the unmasker has recourse to, might have satisfied him again, "that in relating matters of fact, many passages were omitted by the sacred penmen. For, says St. Luke here, ver. 40, "And with many other words," which are not set down.

One would, at first sight, wonder why the unmasker neglects these demonstrative authorities of the holy penmen themselves, where they own their omissions, to tell us, that it is "confessed by all intelligent and observing men, that in relating matters of fact, many passages are omitted by the sacred penmen." St. John, in what he says of his Gospel, directly professes large omissions, and so does St. Luke here. But these omissions would not serve the unmasker's turn; for they are directly against him, and what he would have: and therefore he had reason to pass them by. For St. John, in that passage above-cited, chap. xx. 30, 31, tells us, that how much soever he had left out of his history, he had inserted that which was enough to be believed to eternal life: "but these are written, that ye might believe, and, believing, ye might have life." But this is not all he assures us of, viz. that he had recorded all that was necessary to be believed to eternal life: but he, in express words, tells us what is that *all*, that is necessary to be believed to eternal life; and for the proof of which proposition alone he writ all the rest of his Gospel, viz. that we might believe. What? even this: "That Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God," and that, believing this, we "might have life through his name."

This may serve for a key to us, in reading the history of the New Testament; and show us why this article, that Jesus was the Messiah, is nowhere omitted, though a great part of the arguments used to convince men of it, nay, very often the whole discourse, made to lead men into the belief of it, be entirely omitted. The

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Spirit of God directed them every where to set down the article, which was absolutely necessary to be believed to make men Christians; so that that could no ways be doubted of, nor mistaken: but the arguments and evidences, which were to lead men into this faith, would be sufficient, if they were once found any where, though scattered here and there, in those writings, whereof that infallible Spirit was the author. This preserved the decorum used in all histories, and avoided those continual, large, and unnecessary repetitions, which our critical unmasker might have called tedious, with juster reason than he does the repetition of this short proposition, that Jesus is the Messiah; which I set down no oftener in my book than the Holy Ghost thought fit to insert it in the history of the New Testament, as concise as it is. But this, it seems to our nice unmasker, is "tedious, tedious and offensive." And if a Christian, and a successor of the apostles, cannot bear the being so often told, what it was that our Saviour and his apostles every where preached to the believers of one God, though it be contained in one short proposition; what cause of exception and disgust would it have been to heathen readers, some whereof might, perhaps, have been as critical as the unmasker, if this sacred history had, in every page, been filled with the repeated discourses of the apostles, all of them every where to the same purpose, viz. to persuade men to believe, that Jesus was the Messiah! It was necessary, even by the laws of history, as often as their preaching any where was mentioned, to tell to what purpose they spoke; which being always to convince men of this one fundamental truth, it is no wonder we find it so often repeated. But the arguments and reasonings with which this one point is urged, are, as they ought to be, in most places, left out. A constant repetition of them had been superfluous, and consequently might justly have been blamed as "tedious." But there is enough recorded abundantly to convince any rational man, any one not wilfully blind, that he is that promised Saviour. And, in this, we have a reason of the omissions in the history of the New Testament; which

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were no other than such as became prudent, as well as faithful writers. Much less did that conciseness (with which the unmasker would cover his bold censure of the Gospels and the Acts, and, as it seems, lay them by with contempt) make the holy writers omit any thing, in the preaching of our Saviour and his apostles, absolutely necessary to be known and believed to make men Christians.

Conformable hereunto, we shall find St. Luke writes his history of the Acts of the Apostles. In the beginning of it, he sets down at large some of the discourses made to the unbelieving Jews. But in most other places, unless it be where there was something particular in the circumstances of the matter, he contents himself to tell to what purpose they spoke; which was every where only this, that Jesus was the Messiah. Nay, St. Luke, in the first speech of St. Peter, Acts ii. which he thought fit to give us a great part of, yet owns the omission of several things that the apostle said. For, having expressed this fundamental doctrine, that Jesus was the Messiah, and recorded several of the arguments wherewith St. Peter urged it, for the conversion of the unbelieving Jews, his auditors, he adds, ver. 40, "And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation." Here he confesses, that he omitted a great deal which St. Peter had said to persuade them, To what? To that which, in other words, he had just said before, ver. 38, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ," *i. e.* Believe Jesus to be the Messiah, take him as such for your Lord and King, and reform your lives by a sincere resolution of obedience to his laws.

Thus we have an account of the omissions in the records of matters of fact in the New Testament. But will the unmasker say, That the preaching of those articles that he has given us, as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, was part of those matters of fact, which have been omitted in the history of the New Testament? Can any one think, that "the corruption and degeneracy of human nature, with the true original of it, (the defection of our first parents) the

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propagation of sin and mortality, our restoration and reconciliation by Christ's blood, the eminency and excellency of his priesthood, the efficacy of his death, the full satisfaction thereby made to divine justice, and his being made an all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, our justification by Christ's righteousness, election, adoption," &c. were all proposed, and that too, in the sense of our author's system, by our Saviour and his apostles, as fundamental articles of faith, necessary to be explicitly believed by every man, to make him a Christian, in all their discourses to unbelievers; and yet that the inspired penmen of those histories every where left the mention of these fundamental articles wholly out? This would have been to have writ, not a concise, but an imperfect history of all that Jesus and his apostles taught.

What an account would it have been of the Gospel, as it was first preached and propagated, if the greatest part of the necessary doctrines of it were wholly left out, and a man could not find, from one end to the other of this whole history, that religion which is necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian? And yet this is that, which, under the notion of their being concise, the unmasker would persuade us to have been done by St. Luke and the other evangelists, in their histories. And it is no less than what he plainly says, in his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism, p. 109, where, to aggravate my fault, in passing by the epistles, and to show the necessity of searching in them for fundamentals, he in words blames me, but in effect condemns the sacred history contained in the Gospels and the Acts. "It is most evident," says he, "to any thinking man, that the author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, purposely omits the epistolary writings of the apostles, because they are fraught with other fundamental doctrines, besides that one which he mentions. There we are instructed concerning these grand heads of Christian divinity." Here, *i. e.* in the epistles, says he, "there are discoveries concerning satisfaction," &c. And, in the close of his list of grand heads, as he calls them, some whereof I have above set down out

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of him, he adds, "These are the matters of faith contained in the epistles." By all which expressions he plainly signifies, that these, which he calls fundamental doctrines, are none of those we are instructed in, in the Gospels and the Acts; that they are not discovered nor contained in the historical writings of the evangelists: whereby he confesses, that either our Saviour and his apostles did not propose them in their preachings to their unbelieving hearers; or else, that the several faithful writers of their history, wilfully, *i. e.* unfaithfully, every where omitted them in the account they have left us of those preachings; which could scarce possibly be done by them all, and every where, without an actual combination amongst them, to smother the greatest and most material parts of our Saviour's and his apostles' discourses. For what else did they, if all that the unmasker has set down in his list be fundamental doctrines; every one of them absolutely necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, which our Saviour and his apostles every where preached, to make men Christians? but yet St. Luke, and the other evangelists, by a very guilty and unpardonable conciseness, every where omitted them, and throughout their whole history never once tell us they were so much as proposed, much less that they were those articles which the apostles laboured to establish and convince men of every where, before they admitted them to baptism? Nay the far greatest part of them, the history they writ does not any where so much as once mention? How, after such an imputation as this, the unmasker will clear himself from laying by the four Gospels and the Acts with contempt, let him look; if my not collecting fundamentals out of the epistles had that guilt in it. For I never denied all the fundamental doctrines to be there, but only said that there they were not easy to be found out, and distinguished from doctrines not fundamental. Whereas our good unmasker charges the historical books of the New Testament with a total omission of the far greatest part of those fundamental doctrines of Christianity, which he says are absolutely necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian.

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To convince the reader what was absolutely required to be believed to make a man a Christian, and thereby clear the holy writers from the unmasker's slander, any one need but look a little farther into the history of the Acts, and observe St. Luke's method in the writing of it. In the beginning, (as we observed before) and in some few other places, he sets down at large the discourses made by the preachers of Christianity to their unbelieving auditors. But in the process of his history he generally contents himself to relate what it was their discourses drive at; what was the doctrine they endeavoured to convince their unbelieving hearers of to make them believers. This, we may observe, is never omitted. This is every where set down. Thus, Acts v. 42, he tells us, that "daily in the temple, and in every house, the apostles ceased not to teach, and to preach JESUS THE MESSIAH." The particulars of their discourses he omits, and the arguments they used to induce men to believe, he omits; but never fails to inform us carefully what it was the apostles taught and preached, and would have men believe. The account he gives us of St. Paul's preaching at Thessalonica is this: That "three sabbath-days he *reasoned* with the Jews out of the Scriptures, *opening* and *alleging* that the Messiah must needs have suffered and risen again from the dead; and that Jesus was the Messiah;" Acts xvii. 2, 3. At Corinth, that "he *reasoned* in the synagogue every sabbath, and *persuaded* the Jews and the Greeks, and *testified* that Jesus was the Messiah;" xviii. 4, 5. That "Apollos mightily convinced the Jews, *showing by the Scriptures*, that Jesus was the Messiah;" xviii. 28.

By these and the like places we may be satisfied what it was that the apostles taught and preached, even this one proposition, That Jesus was the Messiah: for this was the sole proposition they reasoned about; this alone they testified, and they showed out of the Scriptures; and of this alone they endeavoured to convince the Jews and the Greeks that believed one God. So that it is plain from hence that St. Luke omitted nothing, that the apostles taught and preached; none of

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those doctrines that it was necessary to convince unbelievers of, to make them Christians; though he, in most places, omitted, as was fit, the passages of Scripture which they alleged, and the arguments those inspired preachers used to persuade men to believe and embrace that doctrine.

Another convincing argument to show that St. Luke omitted none of those fundamental doctrines, which the apostles any where proposed, as necessary to be believed, is from that different account he gives us of their preaching in other places, and to auditors otherwise disposed. Where the apostles had to do with idolatrous heathens, who were not yet come to the knowledge of the only true God, there, he tells us, they proposed also the article of the one invisible God, maker of heaven and earth: and this we find recorded in him out of their preaching to the Lystrians, Acts xiv. and to the Athenians, Acts xvii. In the latter of which, St. Luke, to convince his reader that he, out of conciseness, omits none of those fundamental articles, that were any where proposed by the preachers of the Gospel, as necessary to be believed to make men Christians, sets down not only the article of Jesus the Messiah, but that also of the one invisible God, Creator of all things; which, if any necessary one might, this of all other fundamental articles might, by an author that affected brevity, with the fairest excuse, have been omitted, as being implied in that other, of the Messiah ordained by God. Indeed, in the story of what Paul and Barnabas said at Lystra, the article of the Messiah is not mentioned. Not that St. Luke omitted that fundamental article, where the apostles taught it: but, they having here begun their preaching with that of the one living God, they had not, as appears, time to proceed farther, and propose to them what yet remained to make them Christians: all that they could do, at that time, was, to hinder the people from sacrificing to them. And, before we hear any more of their preaching, they were, by the instigation of the Jews, fallen upon, and Paul stoned.

This, by the way, shows the unmasker's mistake, in

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his first particular, p. 74, where he says, (as he does here again, in the second particular, which we are now examining) that "believing Jesus to be the Messiah is the first step to Christianity; and therefore this, rather than any other, was propounded to be believed by all those, whom either our Saviour, or the apostles, invited to embrace Christianity." The contrary whereof appears here; where the article of one God is proposed in the first place, to those whose unbelief made such a proposal necessary. And therefore, if his reason (which he uses again here, p. 76,) were good, viz. That the article of the Messiah is expressly mentioned alone, "because it is a leading article, and makes way for the rest," this reason would rather conclude for the article of one God; and that alone should be expressly mentioned, instead of the other. Since, as he argues for the other, p. 74, "If they did not believe this, in the first place," viz. that there was one God, "there could be no hopes that they would attend unto any other proposal, relating to the Christian religion." The vanity and falsehood of which reasoning, viz. that "the article of Jesus the Messiah was every where propounded, rather than any other, because it was the leading article," we see in the history of St. Paul's preaching to the Athenians. St. Luke mentions more than one article, where more than one was proposed by St. Paul; though the first of them was that leading article of one God, which if not received, "in the first place, there could be no hope they would attend to the rest."

Something the unmasker would make of this argument, of a leading article, for want of a better, though he knows not what. In his first particular, p. 74, he makes use of it to show, why there was but that one article proposed by the first preachers of the Gospel; and how well that succeeds with him, we have seen. For this is demonstration, that if there were but that one proposed by our Saviour and the apostles, there was but that one necessary to be believed to make men Christians; unless he will impiously say, that our

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Saviour and the apostles went about preaching to no purpose: for if they proposed not all that was necessary to make men Christians, it was in vain for them to preach, and others to hear; if when they heard and believed all that was proposed to them, they were not yet Christians: for if any article was omitted in the proposal, which was necessary to make a man a Christian, though they believed all that was proposed to them, they could not yet be Christians; unless a man can, from an infidel, become a Christian, without doing what was necessary to make him a Christian.

Further, if his argument, of its being a leading article, proves, that that alone was proposed, it is a contradiction to give it as a reason, why it was set down alone by the historian, where it was not proposed alone by the preacher, but other necessary "matters of faith were proposed with it;" unless it can be true, that this article, of "Jesus is the Messiah," was proposed alone by our Saviour and his apostles, because it was a leading article, and was mentioned alone in the history of what they preached, because it was a leading article, though it were not proposed alone, but jointly with other necessary matters of faith. For this is the use he makes here again, p. 76, of his leading article, under his second particular, viz. to show why the historians mentioned this necessary article of Jesus the Messiah alone, in places where the preachers of the Gospel proposed it not alone, but with other necessary articles. But, in this latter case, it has no show of a reason at all. It may be granted as reasonable for the teachers of any religion not to go any farther, where they see the first article which they propose is rejected; where the leading truth, on which all the rest depends, is not received. But it can be no reason at all for an historian, who writes the history of these first preachers, to set down only the first and leading article, and omit all the rest, in instances where more were not only proposed, but believed and embraced, and upon that the hearers and believers admitted into the church. It is not for historians to put any distinction between leading or

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not leading articles; but, if they will give a true and useful account of the religion, whose original they are writing, and of the converts made to it, they must tell, not one, but all those necessary articles, upon assent to which, converts were baptized into that religion, and admitted into the church. Whoever says otherwise, accuses them of falsifying the story, misleading the readers, and giving a wrong account of the religion which they pretend to teach the world, and to preserve and propagate to future ages. This (if it were so) no pretence of conciseness could excuse or palliate.

There is yet remaining one consideration, which were sufficient of itself to convince us, that it was the sole article of faith which was preached; and that if there had been other articles necessary to be known and believed by converts, they could not, upon any pretence of conciseness, be supposed to be omitted: and that is the commissions of those, that were sent to preach the Gospel. Which since the sacred historians mention, they cannot be supposed to leave out any of the material and main heads of those commissions.

St. Luke records it, chap. iv. 43, that our Saviour says of himself, "I must go into the other towns to tell the good news of the kingdom; for (εἰς τοῦτο) upon this errand am I *sent*." This St. Mark calls simply preaching. This preaching, what it contained, St. Matthew tells us, chap. iv. 23, "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of diseases among the people." Here we have his commission, or end of his being sent, and the execution of it; both terminating in this, that he declared the good news, that the kingdom of the Messiah was come; and gave them to understand, by the miracles he did, that he himself was he. Nor does St. Matthew seem to affect such conciseness, that he would have left it out, if the Gospel had contained any other fundamental parts necessary to be believed to make men Christians. For he here says, "All manner of sickness, and all manner of

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diseases," when either of them might have been better left out than any necessary article of the Gospel, to make his history concise.

We see what our Saviour was sent for. In the next place, let us look into the commission he gave the apostles, when he sent them to preach the Gospel. We have it in the tenth of St. Matthew, in these words: "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, *preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey; neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves, (for the workman is worthy of his meat.) And into whatsoever city, or town, ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy, and there abide until ye go thence. And when ye come into any house salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; when ye depart out of that house, or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha, in the day of judgment, than for that city. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues. And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak; for it shall be given you in that same hour, what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father, which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child, and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

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And ye shall be hated of all men, for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel until the Son of man be come. The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple, that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore; for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the house-tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father, which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father, which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it. He that receiveth you, receiveth me: and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a

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righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples"——

This is the commission our Saviour gave his apostles, when he sent them abroad to recover and save "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." And will any of the unmasker's intelligent and observing men say, that the history of the "Scripture is so concise, that any passages," any essential, any material, nay, any parts at all of the apostles' commission, "are here omitted by the sacred penman?" This commission is set down so at full, and so particularly, that St. Matthew, who was one of them to whom it was given, seems not to have left out one word of all that our Saviour gave him in charge. And it is so large, even to every particular article of their instructions, that I doubt not, but my citing so much, "verbatim," out of the sacred text, will here again be troublesome to the unmasker. But whether he will venture again to call it tedious, must be as nature or caution happen to have the better on it. Can any one who reads this commission, unless he hath the brains as well as the brow of an unmasker, allege, that the conciseness of the history of the Scripture has concealed from us those fundamental doctrines, which our Saviour and his apostles preached, but the sacred historians thought fit by consent, for unconceivable reasons, to leave out in the narrative they give us of those preachings? This passage here wholly confuteth that. They could preach nothing but what they were sent to preach: and that we see is contained in these few words, "preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils;" *i. e.* acquaint them, that the kingdom of the Messiah is come, and let them know, by the miracles that you do in my name, that I am that King and Deliverer they expect. If there were any other necessary articles that were to be believed, for the saving

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of the lost sheep they were sent to, can one think that St. Matthew, who sets down so minutely every circumstance of their commission, would have omitted the most important and material of it? He was an ear-witness, and one that was sent: and so (without supposing him inspired) could not be misled by the short account he might receive from others, who by their own, or others' forgetfulness, might have dropped those other fundamental articles, that the apostles were ordered to preach.

The very like account St. Luke gives of our Saviour's commission to the seventy, chap. x. 1—16, "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place whither he himself would come. Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the Son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it; if not, it shall return to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick that are therein, and *say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.* But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you; notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable, in that day, for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee Bethsaida! For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in

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you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you, heareth me: and he that despiseth you, despiseth me: and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me."

Our Saviour's commission here to the seventy, whom he sent to preach, is so exactly conformable to that which he had before given to the twelve apostles, that there needs but this one thing more to be observed, to convince any one that they were sent to convert their hearers to this sole belief, That the kingdom of the Messiah was come, and that Jesus was the Messiah: and that the historians of the New Testament are not so concise in their account of this matter, that they would have omitted any other necessary articles of belief, that had been given to the seventy in commission. That which I mean is, the kingdom of the Messiah is twice mentioned in it to be come, verse 9 and 11. If there were other articles given them by our Saviour, to propose to their hearers, St. Luke must be very fond of this one article, when, for conciseness sake, leaving out the other fundamental articles, that our Saviour gave them in charge to preach, he repeats this more than once.

The unmasker's third particular, p. 76, begins thus: "This also must be thought of, that though there are several parts and members of the Christian faith, yet they do not all occur in any one place of Scripture." Something is in it, (whether owing to his will or understanding, I shall not inquire) that the unmasker always delivers himself in doubtful and ambiguous terms. It had been as easy for him to have said, "There are several articles of the Christian faith necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian," as to say, (as he does here) "There are several parts and members of the Christian faith." But as an evidence of the clearness of his notions, or the fairness of his arguing, he always rests in generals. There are, I grant, several

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parts and members of the Christian faith, which do no more occur in any one place of Scripture, than the whole New Testament can be said to occur in any one place of Scripture. For every proposition, delivered in the New Testament for divine revelation, is "a part and member of the Christian faith." But it is not those "parts and members of the Christian faith" we are speaking of; but only such "parts and members of the Christian faith" as are absolutely necessary to be believed by every man, before he can be a Christian. And in that sense, I deny his assertion to be true, viz. that they do not occur in any one place of the Scripture: for they do all occur in that first sermon of St. Peter, Acts ii. 36, by which three thousand were at that time brought into the church, and that in these words: "therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom you have crucified, Lord and Christ. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Here is the doctrine of Jesus the Messiah, the Lord, and of repentance, proposed to those, who already believe one God: which, I say, are all the parts of the Christian faith necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian. To suppose, as the unmasker does here, that more is required, is to beg, not to prove the question.

If he disputes this collection of mine out of that sermon of St. Peter, I will give him a more authentic collection of the necessary parts of the Christian faith, from an author that he will not question. Let him look into Acts xx. 20, &c. and there he will find St. Paul saying thus to the elders of Ephesus, whom he was taking his last leave of, with an assurance that he should never see them again: "I have kept back nothing that was profitable unto you; but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to the Jews, and also the Greeks, repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ." If St. Paul knew what was necessary to make a Christian, here it is: here he (if he knew how to do it, for it is plain from his words he de-

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signed to do it) has put it together. But there is a greater yet than St. Paul, who has brought all the parts of faith necessary to salvation into one place; I mean our Saviour himself, John xvii. 18, in these words: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."

But the unmasker goes on: "Therefore, when, in some places, only one single part of the Christian faith is made mention of, as necessary to be embraced in order to salvation, we must be careful not to take it alone, but to supply it from several other places, which make mention of other necessary and indispensable points of belief. I will give the reader a plain instance of this, Rom. x. 9, 'If thou shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him (*i. e.* the Lord Jesus) from the dead, thou shalt be saved.' Here one article of faith, viz. the belief of Christ's resurrection (because it is of so great importance in Christianity) is only mentioned: but all the rest must be supposed, because they are mentioned in other places."

Answ. One would wonder that any one conversant in holy writ, with ever so little attention, much more that an expounder of the Scriptures, should so mistake the sense and style of the Scripture. Believing Jesus to be the Messiah, with a lively faith, *i. e.* as I have showed, taking him to be our King, with a sincere submission to the laws of his kingdom, is all that is required to make a man a Christian; for this includes repentance too. The believing him therefore to be the Messiah is very often, and with great reason, put both for faith and repentance too; which are sometimes set down singly, where one is put for both, as implying the other; and sometimes they are both mentioned; and then faith, as contradistinguished to repentance, is taken for a simple assent of the mind to this truth, that Jesus is the Messiah. Now this faith is variously expressed in Scripture.

There are some particulars in the history of our Saviour, allowed to be so peculiarly appropriated to the Messiah, such incommunicable marks of him, that to

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believe them of Jesus of Nazareth, was in effect the same as to believe him to be the Messiah, and so are put to express it. The principal of these is his resurrection from the dead; which being the great and demonstrative proof of his being the Messiah, it is not at all strange, that the believing his resurrection should be put for believing him to be the Messiah; since the declaring his resurrection, was declaring him to be the Messiah. For thus St. Paul argues, Acts xiii. 32, 33, "We declare unto you good tidings, or we preach the Gospel to you, [for so the word signifies] how that the promise, that was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again." The force of which argument lies in this, that, if Jesus was raised from the dead, then he was certainly the Messiah: and thus the promise of the Messiah was fulfilled, in raising Jesus from the dead. The like argument St. Paul useth, 1 Cor. xv. 17. If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, you are yet in your sins;" *i. e.* if Jesus be not risen from the dead, he is not the Messiah, your believing it is in vain, and you will receive no benefit by that faith. And so, likewise, from the same argument of his resurrection, he, at Thessalonica, proves him to be the Messiah, Acts xvii. 2, 3, "And Paul, as his manner was, went into the synagogue, and three sabbath-days reasoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that the Messiah must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is the Messiah."

The necessary connexion of these two, that if he rose from the dead, he was the Messiah; and if he rose not from the dead, he was not the Messiah; the Chief Priest and Pharisees, that had prosecuted him to death, understood very well: who therefore "came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, whilst he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure unto the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead:' so the last

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error shall be worse than the first." The error they here speak of, it is plain, was the opinion that he was the Messiah. To stop that belief, which his miracles had procured him amongst the people, they had got him put to death; but if, after that, it should be believed that he rose again from the dead, this demonstration, that he was the Messiah, would but establish what they had laboured to destroy by his death; since no one, who believed his resurrection, could doubt of his being the Messiah.

It is not at all therefore to be wondered, that his resurrection, his ascension, his rule and dominion, and his coming to judge the quick and the dead, which are characteristical marks of the Messiah, and belong peculiarly to him, should sometimes in Scripture be put alone, as sufficient descriptions of the Messiah; and the believing them of him put for believing him to be the Messiah. Thus, Acts x. our Saviour, in Peter's discourse to Cornelius, when he brought him the Gospel, is described to be the Messiah, by his miracles, death, resurrection, dominion, and coming to judge the quick and the dead.

These, (which in my Reasonableness of Christianity, I have upon this ground taken the liberty to call concomitant articles) where they are set alone for the faith to which salvation is promised, plainly signify the believing Jesus to be the Messiah, that fundamental article, which has the promise of life; and so give no foundation at all for what the unmasker says, in these words: "Here one article of faith, viz. the belief of Christ's resurrection, (because it is of so great importance in Christianity) is only mentioned; but all the rest must be supposed, because they are mentioned in other places."

Answ. If all the rest be of absolute and indispensable necessity to be believed to make a man a Christian, all the rest are, every one of them, of equal importance. For things of equal necessity, to any end, are of equal importance to that end. But here the truth forced its way unawares from the unmasker. Our Saviour's resurrection, for the reason I have given, is truly of great

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importance in Christianity; so great, that his being, or not being the Messiah stands or falls with it: so that these two important articles are inseparable, and in effect make but one. For, since that time, believe one, and you believe both; deny one of them, and you can believe neither. If the unmasker can show me any one of the articles in his list, which is not of this great importance, mentioned alone, with a promise of salvation for believing it, I will grant him to have some colour for what he says here. But where is to be found in the Scripture any such expression as this: if thou shalt believe with thy heart "the corruption and degeneracy of human nature," thou shalt be saved? or the like. This place, therefore, out of the Romans, makes not for, but against his list of necessary articles. One of them, alone, he cannot show me any where set down, with a supposition of the rest, as having salvation promised to it: though it be true, that that one, which alone is absolutely necessary to be superadded to the belief of one God, is, in divers places, differently expressed.

That which he subjoins, as a consequence of what he had said, is a farther proof of this: "And consequently, says he, if we would give an impartial account of our belief, we must consult those places: and they are not all together, but dispersed here and there. Wherefore we must look them out, and acquaint ourselves with the several particulars which make up our belief, and render it entire and consummate."

Answ. Never was a man constanter to a loose way of talking. The question is only about articles necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian: and here he talks of the "several particulars which make up our belief, and render it entire and consummate;" confounding, as he did before, essential and integral parts, which, it seems, he cannot distinguish. Our faith is true and saving, when it is such as God, by the new covenant, requires it to be: but it is not entire and consummate, until we explicitly believe all the truths contained in the word of God. For the whole revelation of truth in the Scripture being the proper and entire

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object of faith, our faith cannot be entire and consummate, until it be adequate to its proper object, which is the whole divine revelation contained in the Scripture: and so, to make our faith entire and consummate, we must not look out those places, which, he says, are not all together. To talk of looking out, and culling of places, is nonsense, where the whole Scripture alone can make up our belief, and render it entire and consummate:" which no one, I think, can hope for, in this frail state of ignorance and error. To make the unmasker speak sense and to the purpose here, we must understand him thus: "That if we will give an impartial account" of the articles that are necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, "we must consult those places where they are; for they are not all together, but dispersed here and there; wherefore we must look them out," and acquaint ourselves with the several particulars, which make up the fundamental articles of our belief, and will render a catalogue of them entire and consummate. If his supposition be true, I grant his method to be reasonable, and upon that I join issue with him. Let him thus "give an impartial account of our belief; let him acquaint us with the several particulars which make up a Christian's belief; and render it entire and consummate." Until he has done this, let him not talk thus in the air of a method that will not do: let him not reproach me, as he does, for not taking a course, by which he himself cannot do, what he reviles me for failing in. "But our hasty author," says he, "took another course, and thereby deceived himself, and unhappily deceived others." If it be so, I desire the unmasker to take the course he proposes, and thereby undeceive me and others; and "acquaint us with the several particulars which make up a Christian's belief, and render it entire and consummate;" for I am willing to be undeceived: but until he has done that, and shown us by the success of it that his course is better, he cannot blame us for following that course we have done.

I come now to his fourth and last particular, p. 78,

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which, he says, "is the main answer to the objection;" and therefore I shall set it down in his own words, entire, as it stands together. "This," says he, "must be borne in our minds, that Christianity was erected by degrees, according to that prediction and promise of our Saviour, that 'the Spirit should teach them all things,' John xiv. 26, and that 'he should guide them into all truth.' John xvi. 13, viz. after his departure and ascension, when the Holy Ghost was to be sent in a special manner, to enlighten men's minds, and to discover to them the great mysteries of Christianity. This is to be noted by us, as that which gives great light in the present case. The discovery of the doctrines of the Gospel was gradual. It was by certain steps, that Christianity climbed to its height. We are not to think then, that all the necessary doctrines of the Christian religion were clearly published to the world in our Saviour's time. Not but that all that were necessary for that time, were published, but some which were necessary for the succeeding one, were not then discovered, or, at least, not fully. They had ordinarily no belief, before Christ's death and resurrection, of those substantial articles, *i. e.* that he should die and rise again: but we read in the Acts, and in the epistles, that these were formal articles of faith afterwards, and are ever since necessary to complete the Christian belief. So as to other great verities, the Gospel increased by degrees, and was not perfect at once. Which furnishes us with a reason why most of the choicest and sublimest truths of Christianity are to be met with in the epistles of the apostles, they being such doctrines as were not clearly discovered and opened in the Gospels and the Acts." Thus far the unmasker.

I thought hitherto, that the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus had been but one, immutably the same: but our unmasker here makes two, or I know not how many. For I cannot tell how to conceive, that the conditions of any covenant should be changed, and the covenant remain the same; every change of conditions, in my apprehension, makes a new and another covenant.

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We are not to think, says the unmasker, "That all the necessary doctrines of the Christian religion were clearly published to the world in our Saviour's time; not but that all that were necessary for that time were published: but some, which were necessary for the succeeding one, were not then discovered, or, at least, not fully." Answ. The unmasker, constant to himself, speaks here doubtfully, and cannot tell whether he should say, that the articles necessary to succeeding times were discovered in our Saviour's time, or no; and therefore, that he may provide himself a retreat, in the doubt he is in, he says, "They were not clearly published; they were not then discovered, or, at least, not fully." But we must desire him to pull off his mask, and to that purpose,

1. I ask him how he can tell, that all the necessary doctrines were obscuredly published, or in part discovered? For an obscure publishing, a discovery in part, is opposed to, and intimated in, "not clearly published, not fully discovered." And, if a clear and full discovery be all that he denies to them, I ask,

XXXVII. "Which those fundamental articles are, which were obscurely published," but not fully discovered in our Saviour's time?

And next I shall desire him to tell me,

XXXVIII. Whether there are any articles necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, that were not discovered at all in our Saviour's time: and which they are?

If he cannot show these distinctly, it is plain he talks at random about them; but has no clear and distinct conception of those that were published, or not published, clearly or obscurely discovered in our Saviour's time. It was necessary for him to say something for those his pretended necessary articles, which are not to be found any where proposed in the preaching of our

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Saviour and his apostles, to their yet unbelieving auditors; and therefore, he says, "We are not to think all the necessary doctrines of the Christian religion were clearly published to the world in our Saviour's time." But he barely says it, without giving any reason, why "we are not to think so." It is enough that it is necessary to his hypothesis. He says, "we are not to think so," and we are presently bound not to think so. Else, from another man, that did not usurp an authority over our thoughts, it would have required some reason to make them think, that something more was required to make a man a Christian after, than in our Saviour's time. For, as I take it, it is not a very probable, much less a self-evident proposition, to be received without proof, that there was something necessary for that time to make a man a Christian, and something more, that was necessary to make a Christian in the succeeding time.

However, since this great master says, "we ought to think so," let us in obedience think so as well as we can: until he vouchsafes to give us some reason to think, that there was more required to be believed to make a man a Christian, in the succeeding time, than in our Saviour's. This, instead of removing, does but increase the difficulty: for if more were necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian after our Saviour's time than was during his life; how comes it, that no more was proposed by the apostles, in their preaching to unbelievers, for the making them Christians, after our Saviour's death, than there was before; even this one article, "that he was the Messiah?" For I desire the unmasker to show me any of those articles mentioned in his list, (except the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour, which were intervening matters of fact, evidencing him to be the Messiah) that were proposed by the apostles, after our Saviour's time, to their unbelieving hearers, to make them Christians. This one doctrine, "that Jesus was the Messiah," was that which was proposed in our Saviour's time to be believed, as necessary to make a man a Christian: the same doctrine

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was, likewise, what was proposed afterwards, in the preaching of the apostles to unbelievers, to make them Christians.

I grant, this was more clearly proposed after, than in our Saviour's time: but in both of them it was all that was proposed to the believers of one God, to make them Christians. Let him show, that there were any other proposed in or after our Saviour's time, to be believed to make unbelievers Christians. If he means, by "necessary articles published to the world," the other doctrines contained in the epistles; I grant, they are all of them necessary articles to be believed by every Christian, as far as he understands them. But I deny, that they were proposed to those they were writ to, as necessary to make them Christians, for this demonstrative reason; because they were Christians already. For example, many doctrines proving, and explaining, and giving a farther light into the Gospel, are published in the epistles to the Corinthians and Thessalonians. These are all of divine authority, and none of them may be disbelieved by any one who is a Christian; but yet what was proposed or published to both the Corinthians and Thessalonians, to make them Christians, was only this doctrine, "That Jesus was the Messiah:" as may be seen, Acts xvii. xviii. This, then, was the doctrine necessary to make men Christians, in our Saviour's time; and this the only doctrine necessary to make unbelievers Christians, after our Saviour's time. The only difference was, that it was more clearly proposed after than before his ascension: the reason whereof has been sufficiently explained. But any other doctrine but this, proposed clearly or obscurely, in or after our Saviour's time, as necessary to be believed to make unbelievers Christians, that remains yet to be shown.

When the unmasker speaks of the doctrines that were necessary for the succeeding time after our Saviour, he is in doubt, whether he should say they were or were not discovered in our Saviour's time; and how far they were then discovered: and therefore he says, "Some of them were not then discovered, or, at least,

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not fully." We must here excuse the doubtfulness of his talking, concerning the discovery of his other necessary articles. For how could he say, they were discovered, or not discovered, clearly or obscurely, fully or not fully; when he does not yet know them all, nor can tell us, what those necessary articles are? If he does know them, let him give us a list of them, and then we shall see easily, whether they were at all published or discovered in our Saviour's time. If there are some of them that were not at all discovered in our Saviour's time, let him speak it out, and leave shifting: and if some of those that were "not necessary for our Saviour's time, but for the succeeding one only," were yet discovered in our Saviour's time, why were they not necessary to be believed in that time? But the truth is, he knows not what these doctrines, necessary for succeeding times, are: and therefore can say nothing positively about their discovery. And for those that he has set down, as soon as he shall name any one of them to be of the number of those, "not necessary for our Saviour's time, but necessary for the succeeding one," it will presently appear, either that it was discovered in our Saviour's time; and then it was as necessary for his time as the succeeding: or else, that it was not discovered in his time, nor to several converts after his time, before they were made Christians; and therefore it was no more necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian in the succeeding, than it was in our Saviour's time. However, general positions and distinctions without a foundation serve for show, and to beguile unwary and inattentive readers.

2. Having thus minded him, that the question is about articles of faith, necessary to be explicitly and distinctly believed to make a man a Christian; I then, in the next place, demand of him to tell me,

XXXIX. Whether or no all the articles, necessary now to be distinctly and explicitly believed, to make any man a Christian, were distinctly and explicitly published or discovered in our Saviour's time?

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And then I shall desire to know of him,

XL. A reason why they were not.

Those that he instances in, of Christ's death and resurrection, will not help him one jot; for they are not new doctrines revealed, new mysteries discovered; but matters of fact, which happened to our Saviour in their due time, to complete in him the character and predictions of the Messiah, and demonstrate him to be the Deliverer promised. These are recorded of him by the Spirit of God in holy writ, but are no more necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, than any other part of divine revelation, but as far as they have an immediate connexion with his being the Messiah, and cannot be denied without denying him to be the Messiah; and therefore this article of his resurrection, (which supposes his death) and such other propositions as are convertible with his being the Messiah, are, as they very well may be, put for his being the Messiah; and, as I have showed, proposed to be believed in the place of it.

All that is revealed in Scripture has a consequential necessity of being believed by all those, to whom it is proposed; because it is of divine authority, one part as much as another. And, in this sense, all the divine truths in the inspired writings are fundamental, and necessary to be believed. But then this will destroy our unmasker's select number of fundamental articles; and "the choicest and sublimest truths of Christianity," which, he tells us, "are to be met with in the Epistles," will not be more necessary to be believed than any, which he may think the commonest or meanest truths in any of the Epistles or the Gospels. Whatsoever part of divine revelation, whether revealed before, or in, or after our Saviour's time; whether it contains (according to the distinction of our unmasker's nice palate) choice or common, sublime or not sublime truths, is necessary to be believed by every one to whom it is proposed, as far as he understands what is proposed. But God, by Jesus Christ, has entered into a covenant of grace with

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mankind; a covenant of faith; instead of that of works, wherein some truths are absolutely necessary to be explicitly believed by them to make men Christians; and therefore those truths are necessary to be known and consequently necessary to be proposed to them to make men Christians. This is peculiar to them to make men Christians. For all men, as men, are under a necessary obligation to believe what God proposes to them to be believed; but there being certain distinguishing truths, which belong to the covenant of the Gospel, which if men know not, they cannot be Christians; and they being, some of them, such as cannot be known without being proposed; those, and those only, are the necessary doctrines of Christianity I speak of; without a knowledge of, and assent to which, no man can be a Christian.

To come therefore to a clear decision of this controversy, I desire the unmasker to tell me,

XLI. What those doctrines are, which are absolutely necessary to be proposed to every man to make him a Christian?

XLII. 1. Whether they are all the truths of divine revelation contained in the Bible?

For I grant his argument, (which in another place he uses for some of them, and truly belongs to them all) viz. that they were revealed and written there, on purpose to be believed, and that it is indispensably necessary for Christians to believe them.

XLIII. 2. Or, whether it be only that one article, of Jesus being the Messiah, which the History of our Saviour and his apostles' preaching has, with such a peculiar distinction, every where proposed?

XLIV. 3. Or, whether the doctrines necessary to be proposed to every one to make him a Christian, be any set of truths between the two?

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And if he says this latter, then I must ask him,

XLV. What they are? that we may see, why those, rather than any other, contained in the New Testament, are necessary to be proposed to every man to make him a Christian; and, if they are not every one proposed to him, and assented to by him, he cannot be a Christian.

The unmasker makes a great noise, and hopes to give his unwary, though well-meaning readers, odd thoughts and strong impressions against my book, by declaiming against my lank faith, and my narrowing of Christianity to one article; which, as he says, is the next way to reduce it to none. But when it is considered, it will be found, that it is he that narrows Christianity. The unmasker, as if he were arbiter and dispenser of the oracles of God, takes upon him to single out some texts of Scripture; and, where the words of Scripture will not serve his turn, to impose on us his interpretations and deductions, as necessary articles of faith; which is, in effect, to make them of equal authority with the unquestionable word of God. And thus, partly in the words of Scripture, and partly in words of his own, he makes a set of fundamentals, with an exclusion of all the other truths delivered by the Spirit of God, in the Bible; though all the rest be of the same divine authority and original, and ought therefore all equally, as far as they are understood by every Christian, to be believed. I tell him, and I desire him to take notice of it, God has nowhere given him an authority thus to garble the inspired writings of the holy Scriptures. Every part of it is his word, and ought, every part of it, to be believed by every Christian man, according as God shall enable him to understand it. It ought not to be narrowed to the cut of the unmasker's peculiar system; it is a presumption of the highest nature, for him thus to pretend, according to his own fancy, to establish a set of fundamental articles. This is to diminish the authority of the word of God, to set up his own; and create a reverence to his system, from which

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the several parts of divine revelation are to receive their weight, dignity, and authority. Those passages of holy writ which suit with that, are fundamental, choice, sublime, and necessary: the rest of the Scripture (as of no great moment) is not fundamental, is not necessary to be believed, may be neglected, or must be tortured, to comply with an analogy of faith of his own making. But though he pretends to a certain set of fundamentals, yet, to show the vanity and impudence of that pretence, he cannot tell us what they are; and therefore in vain contends for a creed he knows not, and is yet nowhere. He neither does, and which is more, I tell him, he never can, give us a collection of his fundamentals gathered upon his principles, out of the Scripture, with the rejection of all the rest, as not fundamental. He does not observe the difference there is between what is necessary to be believed by every man to make him a Christian, and what is required to be believed by every Christian. The first of these is what, by the covenant of the Gospel, is necessary to be known, and consequently to be proposed to every man, to make him a Christian: the latter is no less than the whole revelation of God, all the divine truths contained in holy Scripture: which every Christian man is under a necessity to believe, so far as it shall please God, upon his serious and constant endeavours, to enlighten his mind to understand them.

The preaching of our Saviour and his apostles has sufficiently taught us what is necessary to be proposed to every man, to make him a Christian. He that believes him to be the promised Messiah, takes Jesus for his King, and, repenting of his former sins, sincerely resolves to live, for the future, in obedience to his laws, is a subject of his kingdom, is a Christian. If he be not, I desire the unmasker to tell me what more is requisite to make him so. Until he does that, I rest satisfied, that this is all that was at first, and is still necessary to make a man a Christian.

This, though it be contained in a few words, and those not hard to be understood; though it be in one voluntary act of the mind, relinquishing all irregular

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courses, and submitting itself to the rule of him, whom God hath sent to be our King, and promised to be our Saviour; yet it having relation to the race of mankind, from the first man Adam to the end of the world; it being a contrivance, wherein God has displayed so much of his wisdom and goodness to the corrupt and lost sons of men; and it being a design to which the Almighty had a peculiar regard in the whole constitution and economy of the Jews, as well as in the prophecies and history of the Old Testament; this was a foundation capable of large superstructures: 1. In explaining the occasion, necessity, use, and end of his coming. 2. Next in proving him to be the person promised, by a correspondence of his birth, life, sufferings, death, and resurrection to all those prophecies and types of him, which had given the expectation of such a Deliverer; and to those descriptions of him whereby he might be known when he did come. 3. In the discovery of the sort, constitution, extent, and management of his kingdom. 4. In showing from what we are delivered by him, and how that deliverance is wrought out, and what are the consequences of it.

These, and a great many more the like, afford great numbers of truths delivered both in the historical, epistolary, and prophetical writings of the New Testament, wherein the mysteries of the Gospel hidden from former ages were discovered; and that more fully, I grant, after the pouring out of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles. But could nobody take Christ for their promised King, and resolve to obey him, unless he understood all the truths that concerned his kingdom, or, as I may say, mysteries of state of it? The truth of the contrary is manifest out of the plain and uniform preaching of the apostles, after they had received the Holy Ghost, that was to guide them into all truth. Nay, after the writing of those epistles, wherein were contained the unmasker's sublimest truths; they every where proposed to unbelievers Jesus the Messiah, to be their King, ordained of God; and to this joined repentance: and this alone they preached for the conversion of their unbelieving hearers. As soon as any

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one assented to this, he was pronounced a believer; and these inspired rulers of the church, these infallible preachers of the Gospel, admitted into Christ's kingdom by baptism. And this after, long "after our Saviour's ascension, when (as our unmasker expresses it) the Holy Ghost was to be sent in an especial manner to enlighten men's minds, and to discover to them the great mysteries of Christianity," even as long as the apostles lived: and what others were to do who afterwards were to preach the Gospel St. Paul tells us, 1 Cor. iii. 11. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, even Jesus the Messiah." Though upon this foundation men might build variously things that would or would not hold the touch, yet however as long as they kept firm to this foundation, they should be saved, as appears in the following verses.

And indeed, if all the doctrines of the Gospel, which are contained in the writings of the apostles and evangelists, were necessary to be understood, and explicitly believed in the true sense of those that delivered them, to make a man a Christian; I doubt whether ever any one, even to this day, was a true Christian; though I believe the unmasker will not deny but that, ere this, Christianity (as he expresses it) "is by certain steps climbed to its height."

But for this the unmasker has found a convenient and wise remedy. It is but for him to have the power to declare which of the doctrines delivered in holy writ are, and which are not necessary to be believed, with an additional power to add others of his own that he cannot find there; and the business is done. For unless this be allowed him, his system cannot stand: unless his interpretations be received for authentic revelation, we cannot have all the doctrines necessary for our time; in truth, we cannot be Christians. For to this only what he says concerning the "gradual discovery of the doctrines of the Gospel" tends. "We are not to think," says he, "that all the necessary doctrines of the Christian religion were clearly published to the world in our Saviour's time: not but that all that were necessary for that time were published; but some

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that were necessary for the succeeding one were not then discovered, or, at least, not fully."

I must ask the unmasker a short question or two; as, first,

XLVI. Are not all the doctrines necessary for our time contained in his system?

Next,

XLVII. Can all the doctrines necessary for our time be proposed in the express words of the Scripture?

When he has answered these two plain questions, (and an answer to them I shall expect) the world will then see what he designs by "doctrines necessary for our Saviour's time, and doctrines necessary for succeeding times;" whether he means any thing else by it, but the setting up his system as the exact standard of the Gospel, and the true and unalterable measure of Christianity, in which "it has climbed to its height."

Let not good and sincere Christians be deceived nor perplexed by this maker of another Christianity than what the infallible Spirit of God has left us in the Scriptures. It is evident from thence, that whoever takes Jesus the Messiah for his King, with a resolution to live by his laws, and does sincerely repent as often as he transgresses any of them, is his subject; all such are Christians. What they are to know or believe more concerning him and his kingdom, when they are his subjects, he has left upon record in the great and sacred code and constitutions of his kingdom; I mean in the holy Scriptures. All that is contained therein, as coming from the God of truth, they are to receive as truth, and embrace as such. But since it is impossible explicitly to believe any proposition of the Christian doctrine but what we understand, or in any other sense than we understand it to have been delivered in; an explicit belief is, or can be required in no man, of more than what he understands of that doctrine. And thus,

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whatsoever upon fair endeavours he understands to be contained in that doctrine, is necessary to him to be believed: nor can he continue a subject of Christ upon other terms.

What he is persuaded is the meaning of Christ his King, in any expression he finds in the sacred code; that by his allegiance he is bound to submit his mind to receive for true, or else he denies the authority of Christ, and refuses to believe him; nor can be excused by calling any one on earth master. And hence it is evidently impossible for a Christian to understand any text in one sense, and believe it in another, by whomsoever dictated.

All that is contained in the inspired writings, is all of divine authority, must all be allowed for such, and received for divine and infallible truth, by every subject of Christ's kingdom, *i. e.* every Christian. How comes then the unmasker to distinguish these dictates of the Holy Spirit into necessary and not necessary truths? I desire him to produce his commission, whereby he hath the power given him to tell which of the divine truths contained in the holy Scripture are of necessity to be believed, and which not. Who made him a judge or divider between them? Who gave him this power over the oracles of God, to set up one and debase another at his pleasure? Some, as he thinks fit, are the choicest truths: and what, I beseech him, are the other? Who made him a chooser, where nobody can pick and choose? Every proposition there, as far as any Christian can understand it, is indispensably necessary to be believed: and farther than he does understand it, it is impossible for him to believe it. The laws of Christ's kingdom do not require impossibilities; for they are all reasonable and good.

Some of the truths delivered in the holy writ are very plain: it is impossible, I think, to mistake their meaning; and those certainly are all necessary to be explicitly believed. Others have more difficulty in them, and are not easy to be understood. Is the unmasker appointed Christ's vicegerent here, or the Holy Ghost's interpreter, with authority to pronounce which of these

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are necessary to be believed, and in what sense, and which not? The obscurity, that is to be found in several passages of the Scripture, the difficulties that cover and perplex the meaning of several texts, demand of every Christian study, diligence, and attention, in reading and hearing the Scriptures; in comparing and examining them; and receiving what light he can from all manner of helps, to understand these books, wherein are contained the words of life. This the unmasker, and every one, is to do for himself; and thereby find out what is necessary for him to believe. But I do not know that the unmasker is to understand and interpret for me, more than I for him. If he has such a power, I desire him to produce it. Until then, I can acknowledge no other infallible, but that guide, which he directs me to himself, here in these words: "according to our Saviour's promise, the Holy Ghost was to be sent in a special manner to enlighten men's minds, and to discover to them the great mysteries of Christianity." For whether by men, he here means those, on whom the Holy Ghost was so eminently poured out, Acts ii. or whether he means by these words, that special assistance of the Holy Ghost, whereby particular men, to the end of the world, are to be led into the truth, by opening their understandings, that they may understand the Scriptures, (for he always loves to speak doubtfully and indefinitely) I know no other infallible guide, but the Spirit of God in the Scriptures. Nor has God left it in my choice to take any man for such. If he had, I should think the unmasker the unlikeliest to be he, and the last man in the world to be chosen for that guide: and herein I appeal to any sober Christian, who hath read what the unmasker has, with so little truth and decency, (for it is not always men's fault, if they have not sense) writ upon this question, whether he would not be of the same mind?

But yet, as very an unmasker as he is, he will be extremely apt to call you names, nay, to declare you no Christian; and boldly affirm, you have no Christianity, if you will not swallow it just as it is of his cooking. You must take it just as he has been pleased to dose it;

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no more, nor no less, than what is in his system. He hath put himself into the throne of Christ, and pretends to tell you which are, and which are not the indispensable laws of his kingdom: which parts of his divine revelation you must necessarily know, understand, and believe, and in what sense; and which you need not trouble your head about, but may pass by, as not necessary to be believed. He will tell you, that some of his necessary articles are mysteries, and yet, (as he does, p. 115 of his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism) that they are easy to be understood by any man, when explained to him. In answer to that, I demanded of him, "Who was to explain them? The papists, I told him, would explain some of them one way, and the reformed another; the remonstrants and anti-remonstrants give them different senses; and probably the Trinitarians and Unitarians will profess, that they understand not each other's explications." But to this, in his reply, he has not vouchsafed to give me any answer; which yet I expect, and I will tell him why: because, as there are different explainers, there will be different fundamentals. And therefore unless he can show his authority to be the sole explainer of fundamentals, he will in vain make such a pother about his fundamentals. Another explainer, of as good authority as he, will set up others against them. And what then shall we be the better for all this stir and noise of fundamentals? All the effect of it will be just the same it has been these thousand years and upwards; schisms, separations, contentions, animosities, quarrels, blood and butchery, and all that train of mischiefs which have so long harassed and defamed Christianity, and are so contrary to the doctrine, spirit, and end of the Gospel; and which must still continue as long as any such unmasker shall take upon him to be the dispenser and dictator to others of fundamentals; and peremptorily to define which parts of divine revelation are necessary to be believed, and which Christians may with safety dispense with, and not believe.

To conclude, what was sufficient to make a man a Christian in our Saviour's time, is sufficient still, viz. the

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taking him for our King and Lord, ordained so by God. What was necessary to be believed by all Christians in our Saviour's time, as an indispensable duty, which they owed to their Lord and Master, was the believing all divine revelation, as far as every one could understand it: and just so it is still, neither more nor less. This being so, the unmasker may make what use he pleases of his notion, "that Christianity was erected by degrees;" it will no way (in that sense, in which it is true) turn to the advantage of his select, fundamental, necessary doctrines.

The next chapter has nothing in it but his great bugbear, whereby he hopes to fright people from reading my book, by crying out, Socianianism, Socinianism! Whereas I challenge him again, to show one word of Socinianism in it. But, however, it is worth while to write a book to prove me a Socinian. Truly, I did not think myself so considerable, that the world need be troubled about me, whether I were a follower of Socinus, Arminius, Calvin, or any other leader of a sect among Christians. A Christian I am sure I am, because I believe "Jesus to be the Messiah," the King and Saviour promised, and sent by God: and, as a subject of his kingdom, I take the rule of my faith and life from his will, declared and left upon record in the inspired writings of the apostles and evangelists in the New Testament; which I endeavour to the utmost of my power, as is my duty, to understand in their true sense and meaning. To lead me into their true meaning, I know (as I have above declared) no infallible guide, but the same Holy Spirit, from whom these writings at first came. If the unmasker knows any other infallible interpreter of Scripture, I desire him to direct me to him: until then, I shall think it according to my Master's rule, not to be called, nor to call any man on earth, Master. No man, I think, has a right to prescribe to me my faith, or magisterially to impose his interpretations or opinions on me: nor is it material to any one what mine are, any farther than they carry their own evidence with them. If this, which I think makes me of no sect, entitles me to the name of a papist, or a

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Socinian, because the unmasker thinks these the worst and most invidious he can give me: and labours to fix them on me for no other reason but because I will not take him for my master on earth, and his system for my Gospel: I shall leave him to recommend himself to the world by this skill, who, no doubt, will have reason to thank him for the rareness and subtilty of his discovery. For I think, I am the first man that ever was found to be at the same time a Socinian, and a factor for Rome. But what is too hard for such an unmasker? I must be what he thinks fit; when he pleases, a papist; and when he pleases, a Socinian; and when he pleases, a Mahometan: and probably, when he has considered a little better, an atheist; for I hardly escaped it, when he writ last. My book, he says, had a tendency to it; and if he can but go on, as he has done hitherto, from surmises to certainties, by that time he writes next, his discovery will be advanced, and he will certainly find me an atheist. Only one thing I dare assure him of, that he shall never find, that I treat the things of God or religion so, as if I made only a trade or a jest of them. But let us now see, how at present he proves me a Socinian.

His first argument is, my not answering for my leaving out Matth. xxviii. 19, and John i. 1, page 82 of his Socinianism unmasked. This he takes to be a confession, that I am a Socinian. I hope he means fairly, and that if it be so on my side, it must be taken for a standing rule between us, that where any thing is not answered, it must be taken for granted. And upon that score I must desire him to remember some passages of my Vindication, which I have already, and others, which I shall mind him of hereafter, which he passed over in silence, and had nothing to say to; which therefore, by his own rule, I shall desire the reader to observe, that he has granted.

This being premised, I must tell the unmasker, that I perceive he reads my book with the same understanding that he writes his own. If he had done otherwise, he might have seen that I had given him a reason for my omission of those two, and other "plain and obvious

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passages, and famous testimonies in the evangelists," as he calls them; where I say, p. 166, "That if I have left out none of those passages or testimonies, which contain what our Saviour and his apostles preached and required assent to, to make men believers, I shall think my omissions (let them be what they will) no faults in the present case. Whatever doctrines Mr. Edwards would have to be believed, to make a man a Christian, he will be sure to find them in those preachings and famous testimonies of our Saviour and his apostles, I have quoted. And if they are not there, he may rest satisfied, that they were not proposed, by our Saviour and his apostles, as necessary to be believed to make men Christ's disciples." From which words, any one, but an unmasker, could have understood my answer to be, that all that was necessary to be believed to make men Christians, might be found in what our Saviour and his apostles proposed to unbelievers for their conversion: but the two passages above-mentioned, as well as a great many others in the evangelists, being none of those, I had no reason to take notice of them. But the unmasker, having, out of his good pleasure, put it once upon me, as he does in his Thoughts of the Causes of Atheism," p. 107, that I was an "epitomizer of the evangelical writings," though every one may see I make not that my business; yet it is no matter for that, I must be always accountable to that fancy of his. But when he has proved,

XLVIII. That this is not as just a reason for my omitting them, as several other obvious passages and famous testimonies in the evangelists, which I there mention, for whose omission he does not blame me;

I will undertake to give him another reason, which I know not whether he were not better let alone.

The next proof of my being a Socinian is, that I take the Son of God to be an expression used to signify the Messiah. Slichtingius and Socinus understood it so;

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and therefore I am, the unmasker says, a Socinian. Just as good an argument, as that I believe Jesus to be a prophet, and so do the Mahometans; therefore I am a Mahometan: or thus, the unmasker holds, that the Apostles' Creed does not contain all things necessary to salvation; and so says Knot the Jesuit; therefore the unmasker is a papist. Let me turn the tables, and by the same argument I am orthodox again. For two orthodox, pious, and very eminent prelates of our church, whom, when I follow authorities, I shall prefer to Slichtingius and Socinus, understand it as I do; and therefore I am orthodox. Nay, it so falls out, that if it were of force either way, the argument would weigh most on this side; since I am not wholly a stranger to the writings of those two orthodox bishops; but I never read a page in either of those Socinians. The never sufficiently admired and valued archbishop Tillotson's words, which I quoted, the unmasker says, "do not necessarily import any such thing." I know no words that necessarily import any thing to a caviller. But he was known to have such clear thoughts, and so clear a style, so far from having any thing doubtful or fallacious in what he said, that I shall only set down his words as they are in his Sermon of Sincerity, p. 2, to show his meaning: "Nathanael," says he, "being satisfied, that he [our Saviour] was the Messiah, he presently owned him for such, calling him THE SON OF GOD, and the King of Israel."

The words of the other eminent prelate, the bishop of Ely, whom our church is still happy in, are these: "To be the Son of God, and to be Christ, being but different expressions of the same thing:" witness p. 14. And p. 10, "It is the very same thing to believe, that Jesus is the Christ," and to believe, "that Jesus is the Son of God, express it how you please." "This alone is the faith which can regenerate a man, and put a divine spirit into him, that it makes him a conqueror over the world, as Jesus was." Of this the unmasker says, that this reverend author, "speaking only in a general way, represents these two as the same thing," viz. that Jesus is the Christ, and that

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Jesus is the Son of God, because these expressions are applied to the same person, and because they are both comprehended in one general name, viz. Jesus. Answ. The question is, Whether these two expressions, "the Son of God," and "the Messiah," in the learned bishop's opinion, signify the same thing? If his opinion had been asked in the point, I know not how he could have declared it more clearly. For he says, they are "Expressions of the same thing;" and that it is the very same thing to believe, "that Jesus is the Messiah," and to believe "that he is the Son of God;" which cannot be so, if Messiah and Son of God have different significations: for then they will make two distinct propositions in different senses, which it can be no more the same thing to believe, than it is the same thing to believe, that Mr. Edwards is a notable preacher, and a notable railer; or than it is to believe one truth, and all truths. For by the same reason, that it is the same thing to believe two distinct truths, it will be the same thing to believe two thousand distinct truths, and consequently all truths. The unmasker, that he might seem to say something, says, that "the reverend author represents these as the same thing." Answ. The unmasker never fails, like Midas, to turn every thing he touches into his own metal. The learned bishop says very directly and plainly, that "to be the Son of God, and to be the Messiah, are expressions of the same thing:" and the unmasker says, he "represents these expressions as one thing:" for it is of expressions that both the bishop and he speak. Now, expressions can be one thing, but one of these two ways; either in sound, and so these two expressions are not one; or in signification, and so they are. And then the unmasker says, but in other words, what the bishop had said before, viz. That these two, "to be the Son of God, and to be the Messiah, are expressions of the same thing." Only the unmasker has put in the word represents, to amuse his reader, as if he had said something; and so indeed he does, after his fashion, *i. e.* obscurely and fallaciously; which, when it comes to be examined, is but the same thing under show of a

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difference; or else, if it has adifferent meaning, it is demonstratively false. But so it be obscure enough to deceive a willing reader, who will not be at the pains to examine what he says, it serves his turn.

But yet, as if he had said something of weight, he gives reasons for putting "represents these two expressions as one thing," instead of saying "these two are but different expressions of the same thing."

The first of his reasons is, Because the reverend author is here "speaking only in a general way." Answ. What does the unmasker mean by a general way? The learned bishop speaks of two particular expressions applied to our Saviour. But was his discourse ever so general, how could that alter the plain signification of his words, viz. that those two are but "different expressions of the same thing?"

Secondly, "Because these expressions are applied to the same person." Answ. A very demonstrative reason, is it not? that therefore they cannot be different expressions of the same thing!

Thirdly, "And because they are both comprehended in one general name, viz. Jesus." Answ. It requires some skill to put so many falsehoods in so few words; for neither both nor either of these expressions are comprehended in the name, Jesus; and that Jesus, the name of a particular person, should be a general name, is a discovery reserved to be found out by this new logician. However, general is a learned word, which when a man of learning has used twice, as a reason of the same thing, he is covered with generals. He need not trouble himself any farther about sense; he may safely talk what stuff he pleases, without the least suspicion of his reader.

Having thus strongly proved just nothing, he proceeds; and tells us, p. 91, "Yet it does not follow thence, but that, if we will speak strictly and closely, we must be forced to confess, they are of different significations." By which words (if his words have any signification) he plainly allows, that the bishop meant as he says, that these two are but "different expressions of the same thing:" but withal tells him, that, if he will "speak closely and strictly," he must

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say, "they are of different significations." My concernment in the case being only, that in the passage alleged, the reverend author said, that the Son of God, and the Messiah, were "different expressions of the same thing," I have no more to demand after these words of the unmasker; he has in them granted all I would have: and I shall not meddle with his "speaking closely and strictly," but shall leave it to the decisive authority of this superlative critic to determine whether this learned bishop, or any one living, besides himself, can understand the phrases of the New Testament, and "speak strictly and closely" concerning them. Perhaps, his being yet alive, may preserve this eminent prelate from the malicious drivelling of this unmasker's pen, which has bespattered the ashes of two of the same order, who were no mean ornaments of the English church; and if they had been now alive, nobody will doubt but the unmasker would have treated them after another fashion.

But let me ask the unmasker, whether if either of these pious prelates, whose words I have above quoted, did understand that phrase of the Son of God to stand for the Messiah; (which they might do without holding any one Socinian tenet) he will dare to pronounce him a Socinian? This is so ridiculous an inference, that I could not but laugh at it. But withal tell him, Vindic. p. 172, "That if the sense, wherein I understand those texts, be a mistake, I shall be beholden to him to set me right: but they are not popular authorities, or frightful names, whereby I judge of truth or falsehood." To which I subjoin these words: "You will now, no doubt, applaud your conjectures; the point is gained, and I am openly a Socinian; since I will not disown, that I think the Son of God was a phrase, that, among the Jews, in our Saviour's time, was used for the Messiah, though the Socinians understood it in the same sense. And therefore I must certainly be of their persuasion in every thing else. I admire the acuteness, force, and fairness of your reasoning; and so I leave you to triumph in your conjectures." Nor has he failed my expectation:

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for here, p. 91, of his Socinianism unmasked, he, upon this, erects his comb, and crows most mightily. "We may," says he, "from hence, as well as other reasons, pronounce him the same with those gentlemen (*i. e.* as he is pleased to call them, my good patrons and friends the Racovians;) which you may perceive he is very apprehensive of, and thinks, that this will be reckoned a good evidence of his being, what he denied himself to be before." "The point is gained, saith he, and I am openly a Socinian." "He never uttered truer words in his life, and they are the confutation of all his pretences to the contrary. This truth, which unwarily dropped from his pen, confirms what I have laid to his charge." Now you have sung your song of triumph, it is fit you should gain your victory, by showing,

XLIX. How my understanding the Son of God to be a phrase used amongst the Jews, in our Saviour's time, to signify the Messiah, proves me to be a Socinian?

Or, if you think you have proved it already, I desire you to put your proof into a syllogism: for I confess myself so dull, as not to see any such conclusion deducible from my understanding that phrase as I do, even when you have proved that I am mistaken in it.

The places, which in the New Testament show, that the Son of God stands for the Messiah, are so many and so clear, that I imagine nobody that ever considered and compared them together, could doubt of their meaning, unless he were an unmasker. Several of them I have collected and set down in my Reasonableness of Christianity, p. 17, 18, 19, 21, 28, 52.

First, John the Baptist, John i. 20, when the Jews sent to know who he was, confessed he himself was not the Messiah. But of Jesus he says, ver. 34, after having several ways, in the foregoing verses, declared him to be the Messiah: "And I saw and bare record, that this is the Son of God." And again, chap. iii. 26—36, he declaring Jesus to be, and himself not to be the

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Messiah, he does it in these synonymous terms, of the Messiah, and the Son of God; as appears by comparing ver. 28, 35, 36.

Nathanael owns him to be the Messiah, in these words, John i. 50, "Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel:" which our Saviour, in the next verse, calls believing; a term, all through the history of our Saviour, used for owning Jesus to be the Messiah. And for confirming that faith of his, that he was the Messiah, our Saviour further adds, that he should see greater things, *i. e.* should see him do greater miracles, to evidence that he was the Messiah.

Luke iv. 41, "And devils also came out of many, crying, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of God; and he, rebuking them, suffered them not to speak." And so again, St. Mark tells us, chap. iii. 11, 12; "That unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he strictly charged them, that they should not make him known." In both these places, which relate to different times, and different occasions, the devils declare Jesus to be the Son of God. It is certain, whatever they meant by it, they used a phrase of a known signification in that country: and what may we reasonably think they designed to make known to the people by it? Can we imagine these unclean spirits were promoters of the Gospel, and had a mind to acknowledge and publish to the people the deity of our Saviour, which the unmasker would have to be the signification of the Son of God? Who can entertain such a thought? No, they were no friends to our Saviour: and therefore desired to spread a belief of him, that he was the Messiah, that so he might, by the envy of the Scribes and Pharisees, be disturbed in his ministry, and be cut off before he had completed it. And therefore we see, our Saviour in both places forbids them to make him known; as he did his disciples themselves, for the same reason. For when St. Peter, Matt. xvi. 16, had owned Jesus to be the Messiah, in these words: "Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God;" it follows, ver. 20, "Then charged he his disciples, that they should

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tell no man that he was Jesus the Messiah:" just as he had forbid the devils to make him known *i. e.* to be the Messiah. Besides, these words here of St. Peter can be taken in no other sense, but barely to signify, that Jesus was the Messiah, to make them a proper answer to our Saviour's question. His first question here to his disciples, ver. 13, is, "Whom do men say, that I, the Son of man, am?" The question is not, Of what original do you think the Messiah, when he comes, will be? For then this question would have been as it is, Matt. xxii. 42, "What think ye of the Messiah, whose Son is he?" if he had inquired about the common opinion, concerning the nature and descent of the Messiah. But this question is concerning himself: Whom, of all the extraordinary persons known to the Jews, or mentioned in their sacred writings, the people thought him to be? That this was the meaning of his question is evident from the answer the apostles gave to it, and his further demand, ver. 14, 15, "They said, Some say thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But *whom* say ye that I am? The people take me, some for one of the prophets or extraordinary messengers from God, and some for another: But which of them do you take me to be? "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Messiah, the Son of the living God." In all which discourse, it is evident there was not the least inquiry made by our Saviour concerning the person, nature, or qualifications of the Messiah; but whether the people or his apostles thought him, *i. e.* Jesus of Nazareth, to be the Messiah. To which St. Peter gave him a direct and plain answer in the foregoing words, declaring their belief of him to be the Messiah: which is all that, with any manner of congruity, could be made the sense of St. Peter's answer. This alone of itself were enough to justify my interpretation of St. Peter's words, without the authority of St. Mark and St. Luke, both whose words confirm it. For St. Mark, chap. viii. 29, renders it, "Thou art the Messiah;" and St. Luke, chap. ix. 20, "The Messiah of God." To the like question, "Who art thou?" John the Baptist gives a like answer,

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John i. 19, 20, "I am not the Christ." By which answer, as well as by the foregoing verses, it is plain, nothing was understood to be meant by that question, but, Which of the extraordinary persons, promised to, or expected by, the Jews art thou?

John xi. 27, the phrase of the Son of God is made use of by Martha; and that it was used by her to signify the Messiah, and nothing else, is evident out of the context. Martha tells our Saviour, that if he had been there, before her brother died, he, by that divine power which he had manifested in so many miracles which he had done, could have saved his life; and that now, if our Saviour would ask it of God, he might obtain the restoration of his life. Jesus tells her he shall rise again: which words Martha taking to mean at the general resurrection at the last day, Jesus thereupon takes occasion to intimate to her, that he was the Messiah, by telling her, that he was "the resurrection and the life;" *i. e.* that the life, which mankind should receive at the general resurrection, was by and through him. This was a description of the Messiah, it being a received opinion among the Jews, that when the Messiah came, the just should rise, and live with him for ever. And having made this declaration of himself to be the Messiah, he asks Martha, "Believest thou this?" What? Not whose son the Messiah should be; but whether he himself was the Messiah, by whom believers should have eternal life at the last day. And to this she gives this direct and apposite answer: "Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world." The question was only, Whether she was persuaded, that those, who believed in him, should be raised to eternal life; that was in effect, "Whether he was the Messiah?" And to this she answers, Yea, Lord, I believe this of thee: and then she explains what was contained in that faith of hers; even this, that he was the Messiah that was promised to come, by whom alone men were to receive eternal life.

What the Jews also understood by the Son of God is likewise clear from that passage at the latter end of

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Luke xxii. They having taken our Saviour, and being very desirous to get a confession from his own mouth that he was the Messiah, that they might be from thence able to raise a formal and prevalent accusation against him before Pilate, the only thing the council asked him was, Whether he was the Messiah? v. 67. To which he answers so, in the following words, that he lets them see he understood that the design of their question was to entrap him, and not to believe in him, whatever he should declare of himself. But yet he tells them, "Hereafter shall the Son of man sit on the right hand of the power of God:" words that to the Jews plainly enough owned him to be the Messiah; but yet such as could not have any force against him with Pilate. He having confessed so much, they hope to draw yet a clearer confession from him. "Then said they all, Art thou then the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? For we ourselves have heard of his own mouth." Can any one think, that the doctrine of his deity (which is that which the unmasker accuses me for waving) was that which the Jews designed to accuse our Saviour of, before Pilate; or that they needed witnesses for? Common sense, as well as the current of the whole history, shows the contrary. No, it was to accuse him, that he owned himself to be the Messiah, and thereby claimed a title to be King of the Jews. The Son of God was so known a name amongst the Jews, to stand for the Messiah, that having got that from his mouth, they thought they had proof enough for treason against him. This carries with it a clear and easy meaning. But if the Son of God be to be taken, as the unmasker would have it, for a declaration of his deity, I desire him to make common and coherent sense of it.

I shall add one consideration more to show that the Son of God was a form of speech then used among the Jews, to signify the Messiah, from the persons that used it, viz. John the Baptist, Nathanael, St. Peter, Martha, the Sanhedrim, and the centurion, Matth. xxvii. 54. Here are Jews, heathens, friends, enemies, men, women,

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believers and unbelievers, all indifferently use this phrase of the Son of God, and apply it to Jesus. The question between the unmasker and me is, Whether it was used by these several persons as an appellation of the Messiah, or, (as the unmasker would have it) in a quite different sense; as such an application of divinity to our Saviour, that he that shall deny that to be the meaning of it in the minds of these speakers, denies the divinity of Jesus Christ. For if they did speak it without that meaning, it is plain it was a phrase known to have another meaning; or else they had talked unintelligible jargon. Now I will ask the unmasker, "Whether he thinks, that the eternal generation, or, as the unmasker calls it, filiation of Jesus the Son of God, was a doctrine that had entered into the thoughts of all the persons above-mentioned, even of the Roman centurion, and the soldiers that were with him watching Jesus?" If he says he does, I suppose he thinks so only for this time, and for this occasion: and then it will lie upon him to give the world convincing reasons for his opinion, that they may think so too; or if he does not think so, he must give up his argument, and allow that this phrase, in these places, does not necessarily import the deity of our Saviour, and the doctrine of his eternal generation: and so a man may take it to be an expression standing for the Messiah, without being a Socinian, any more than he himself is one.

"There is one place," the unmasker tells us, p. 87, "that confutes all the surmises about the identity of these terms. It is," says he, "that famous confession of faith which the Ethiopian eunuch made, when Philip told him, he might be baptized, if he believed. This, without doubt, was said, according to that apprehension which he had of Christ from Philip's instructing him; for he said he preached unto him Jesus, ver. 35. He had acquainted him, that Jesus was the Christ, the anointed of God, and also, that he was the Son of God; which includes in it that he was God. And accordingly, this noble proselyte gives this account of his faith, in order to his being baptized, in order to his being admitted a member of Christ's church: 'I be-

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lieve that Jesus is the Son of God:' or you may read it according to the Greek, 'I believe the Son of God to be Jesus Christ.' Where there are these two distinct propositions:

"1st, That Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah.

"2dly, That he is not only the Messiah, but the Son of God."

The unmasker is every where steadily the same subtile arguer. Whether he has proved that the Son of God, in this confession of the eunuch, signifies what he would have, we shall examine by and by. This at least is demonstration, that this passage of his overturns his principles; and reduces his long list of fundamentals to two propositions, the belief whereof is sufficient to make a man a Christian. "This noble proselyte," says the unmasker, "gives this account of his faith, in order to his being baptized, in order to his being admitted a member of Christ's church." And what is that faith, according to the unmasker? He tells you, "there are in it these two distinct propositions, viz. I believe, 1st, That Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah: 2dly, That he is not only the Messiah, but the Son of God." If this famous confession, containing but these two articles, were enough to his being baptized; if this faith were sufficient to make this noble proselyte a Christian; what is become of all those other articles of the unmasker's system, without the belief whereof, he, in other places, tells us a man cannot be a Christian? If he had here told us, that "Philip had not time nor opportunity," during his short stay with the eunuch, to explain to him all the unmasker's system, and make him understand all his fundamentals; he had had reason on his side: and he might have urged it as a reason why Philip taught him no more. But nevertheless he had, by allowing the eunuch's confession of faith sufficient for his admittance as a member of Christ's church, given up his other fundamentals, as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian; even that of the Holy Trinity; and he has at last reduced his necessary articles to these two, viz. "That Jesus is the Messiah;" and that "Jesus is the Son of God." So that, after his

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ridiculous calling mine a lank faith, I desire him to consider what he will now call his own. Mine is next to none, because, as he says, it is but one article. If that reasoning be good, his is not far from none; it consists but in two articles, which is next to one, and very little more remote from none than one is. If any one had but as much wit as the unmasker, and could be but as smart upon the number two, as he has been upon an unit, here were a brave opportunity for him to lay out his parts; and he might make vehement complaints against one, that has thus "cramped our faith, corrupted men's minds, depraved the Gospel, and abused Christianity." But if it should fall out, as I think it will, that the unmasker's two articles should prove to be but one; he has saved another that labour, and he stands painted to himself with his own charcoal.

The unmasker would have the Son of God, in the confession of the eunuch, to signify something different from the Messiah: and his reason is, because else it would be an absurd tautology. Ans. There are many exegetical expressions put together in Scripture, which, though they signify the same thing, yet are not absurd tautologies. The unmasker here inverts the proposition, and would have it to signify thus: "The Son of God is Jesus the Messiah;" which is a proposition so different from what the apostles proposed, every where else, that he ought to have given a reason why, when, every where else, they made the proposition to be of something affirmed of Jesus of Nazareth, the eunuch should make the affirmation to be of something concerning the Son of God: as if the eunuch knew very well what the Son of God signified, viz. as the unmasker tells us here, that it included or signified God; and that Philip (who, we read, at Samaria preached τὸν Χριστὸν the Messiah, *i. e.* instructed them who the Messiah was) had here taken pains only to instruct him, that this God was Jesus the Messiah, and to bring him to assent to that proposition. Whether this be natural to conceive, I leave to the reader.

The tautology, on which the unmasker builds his

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whole objection, will be quite removed if we take Christ here for a proper name, in which way it is used by the evangelists and apostles in other places, and particularly by St. Luke, in Acts ii. 38. iii. 6, 20. iv. 10. xxiv. 24, &c. In two of these places it cannot, with any good sense, be taken otherwise; for, if it be not in Acts iii. 6, and iv. 10, used as a proper name, we must read those places thus, "Jesus the Messiah of Nazareth." And I think it plain in those others cited, as well as in several other places of the New Testament, that the word Christ is used as a proper name. We may easily conceive, that long before the Acts were writ, the name of Christ was grown, by a familiar use, to denote the person of our Saviour as much as Jesus. This is so manifest, that it gave a name to his followers; who, as St. Luke tells us, xi. 26, were called Christians; and that, if chronologists mistake not, twenty years before St. Luke writ his history of the apostles: and this so generally, that Agrippa, a Jew, uses it, Acts xxvi. 28. And that Christ, as the proper name of our Saviour, was got as far as Rome, before St. Luke writ the Acts, appears out of Suetonius, l. 5; and by that name he is called in Tacitus, Ann. l. 15. It is no wonder then, that St. Luke, in writing this history, should sometimes set it down alone, sometimes joined with that of Jesus, as a proper name; which is much easier to conceive he did here, than that Philip proposed more to the eunuch to be believed to make him a Christian, than what, in other places, was proposed for the conversion of others, or than what he himself proposed at Samaria.

His 7th chapter is to prove that I am a Socinian, because I omitted Christ's satisfaction. That matter having been answered, p. 265, where it came properly under consideration, I shall only observe here, that the great stress of his argument lies, as it did before, not upon my total omission of it out of my book, but on this, that "I have no such thing in the place where the advantages of Christ's coming are purposely treated of;" from whence he will have this to be an unavoidable inference, viz. "That I was of opinion, that

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Christ came not to satisfy for us." The reason of my omission of it in that place, I told him, was because my book was chiefly designed for Deists; and therefore I mentioned only those advantages, which all Christians must agree in; and, in omitting of that, complied with the apostle's rule, Rom. xiv. To this he tells me flatly, that was not the design of my book. Whether the unmasker knows with what design I published it, better than myself, must he left to the reader to judge: for as for his veracity in what he knows, or knows not, he has given so many instances of it, that I may safely refer that to any body. One instance more of it may be found in this very chapter, where he says, "I pretend indeed, page 168, that, in another place of my book, I mention Christ's restoring all mankind from the state of death, and restoring them to life: and his laying down his life for another, as our Saviour professes he did. These few words this vindicator has picked up in his book since he wrote it. This is all, through his whole treatise, that he hath dropped concerning that advantage of Christ's incarnation; *i. e.* Christ's satisfaction." Answ. But that this is not all that I have dropped through my whole treatise, concerning that advantage, may appear by those places above-mentioned, p. 168, where I say, that the design of Christ's coming was to be offered up, and speak of the work of redemption; which are expressions taken to imply our Saviour's satisfaction. But the unmasker thinking I should have quoted them, if there had been any more, besides those mentioned in my vindication, upon that presumption sticks not boldly to affirm, that there were no more; and so goes on with the veracity of an unmasker. If affirming would do it, nothing could be wanting in his cause, that might be for his purpose. Whether he be as good at proving, this consequence (among other propositions, which remain upon him to be proved) will try, viz.

L. That if the satisfaction of Christ be not mentioned in the place where the advantages of Christ's

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coming are purposely treated of, then I am of opinion, that Christ came not to satisfy for us:

which is all the argument of his 7th chapter.

His last chapter, as his first, begins with a commendation of himself; particularly, it boasts his freedom from bigotism, dogmatizing, censoriousness, and uncharitableness. I think he hath drawn himself so well with his own pen, that I shall need refer the reader only to what he himself has wrote in this controversy, for his character.

In the next paragraph, p. 104, he tells me, "I laugh at orthodoxy." Answ. There is nothing that I think deserves a more serious esteem than right opinion, (as the word signifies) if taken up with the sense and love of truth. But this way of becoming orthodox has always modesty accompanying it, and a fair acknowledgment of fallibility in ourselves, as well as a supposition of error in others. On the other side, there is nothing more ridiculous, than for any man, or company of men, to assume the title of orthodoxy to their own set of opinions, as if infallibility were annexed to their systems, and those were to be the standing measure of truth to all the world; from whence they erect to themselves a power to censure and condemn others, for differing at all from the tenets they have pitched upon. The consideration of human frailty ought to check this vanity: but since it does not, but that, with a sort of allowance, it shows itself in almost all religious societies, the playing the trick round sufficiently turns it into ridicule. For each society having an equal right to a good opinion of themselves, a man by passing but a river, or a hill, loses that orthodoxy in one company, which puffed him up with such assurance and insolence in another; and is there, with equal justice, himself exposed to the like censures of error and heresy, which he was so forward to lay on others at home. When it shall appear, that infallibility is entailed upon one set of men of any denomination, or truth confined to any spot of ground, the name and use of orthodoxy, as now it is in fashion every where, will in that one place be reasonable.

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Until then, this ridiculous cant will be a foundation too weak to sustain that usurpation that is raised upon it. It is not that I do not think every one should be persuaded of the truth of those opinions he professes. It is that I contend for; and it is that which I fear the great sticklers for orthodoxy often fail in. For we see generally that numbers of them exactly jump in a whole large collection of doctrines, consisting of abundance of particulars; as if their notions were, by one common stamp, printed on their minds, even to the least lineament. This is very hard, if not impossible, to be conceived of those who take up their opinions only from conviction. But, how fully soever I am persuaded of the truth of what I hold, I am in common justice to allow the same sincerity to him that differs from me; and so we are upon equal terms. This persuasion of truth on each side, invests neither of us with a right to censure or condemn the other. I have no more reason to treat him ill for differing from me, than he has to treat me ill for the same cause. Pity him, I may; inform him fairly, I ought: but contemn, malign, revile, or any otherwise prejudice him for not thinking just as I do, that I ought not. My orthodoxy gives me no more authority over him, than his (for every one is orthodox to himself) gives him over me. When the word orthodoxy (which in effect signifies no more but the opinions of my party) is made use of as a pretence to domineer, (as ordinarily it is) it is, and always will be, ridiculous.

He says, "I hate, even with a deadly hatred, all catechisms and confessions, all systems and models." I do not remember, that I have once mentioned the word catechism, either in my Reasonableness of Christianity, or Vindication; but he knows "I hate them deadly," and I know I do not. And as for systems and models, all that I say of them, in the pages he quotes to prove my hatred of them, is only this, viz. in my Vindication, p. 164, 165, "Some had rather you should write booty, and cross your own design of removing men's prejudices to Christianity, than leave out one tittle of what they put into their systems.—Some men will not bear it, that any one should speak of religion, but according

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to the model that they themselves have made of it." In neither of which places do I speak against systems or models, but the ill use that some men make of them.

He tells me also in the same place, p. 104, that I deride mysteries. But for this he hath quoted neither words nor place: and where he does not do that, I have reason, from the frequent liberties he takes to impute to me what nowhere appears in my books, to desire the reader to take what he says not to be true. For did he mean fairly, he might, by quoting my words, put all such matters of fact out of doubt; and not force me, so often as he does, to demand where it is: as I do now here again,

LI. Where it is that I deride mysteries?

His next words, p. 104, are very remarkable: they are, "O how he [the vindicator] grins at the spirit of creed-making! p. 169, Vindic. The very thoughts of which do so haunt him, so plague and torment him, that he cannot rest until it be conjured down. And here, by the way, seeing I have mentioned his rancour against systematic books and writings, I might represent the misery that is coming upon all booksellers, if this gentleman and his correspondence go on successfully. Here is an effectual plot to undermine Stationers'-hall; for all systems and bodies of divinity, philosophy, &c. must be cashiered: whatsoever looks like system must not be bought or sold. This will fall heavy on the gentlemen of St. Paul's Churchyard, and other places." Here the politic unmasker seems to threaten me with the posse of Paul's Churchyard, because my book might lessen their gain in the sale of theological systems. I remember that "Demetrius the shrine-maker, which brought no small gain to the craftsmen, whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation, and said to this purpose: Sirs, ye know, that by this craft we have our wealth: moreover ye see and hear, that this Paul hath persuaded, and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods that are made with hands; so that this our craft is in danger to be set at nought. And when they heard these sayings, they were full of

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wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Have you, sir, who are so good at speech-making, as a worthy successor of the silver-smith, regulating your zeal for the truth, and your writing divinity, by the profit it will bring, made a speech to this purpose to the craftsmen, and told them, that I say, articles of faith, and creeds, and systems in religion, cannot be made by men's hands or fancies; but must be just such, and no other than what God hath given us in the Scriptures? And are they ready to cry out to your content, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians?" If you have well warmed them with your oratory, it is to be hoped they will heartily join with you, and bestir themselves, and choose you for their champion, to prevent the misery, you tell them, is coming upon them, in the loss of the sale of systems and bodies of divinity: for, as for philosophy, which you name too, I think you went a little too far; nothing of that kind, as I remember, hath been so much as mentioned. But, however, some sort of orators, when their hands are in, omit nothing, true or false, that may move those they would work upon. Is not this a worthy employment, and becoming a preacher of the Gospel, to be a solicitor for Stationers'-hall; and make the gain of the gentlemen of Paul's Churchyard a consideration for or against any book writ concerning religion? This, if it were ever thought on before, nobody but an unmasker, who lays all open, was ever so foolish as to publish. But here you have an account of his zeal: the views of gain are to measure the truths of divinity. Had his zeal, as he pretends in the next paragraph, no other aims but the "defence of the Gospel;" it is probable this controversy would have been managed after another fashion.

Whether what he says in the next, p. 105, to excuse his so often pretending to "know my heart and thoughts," will satisfy the reader, I shall not trouble myself. By his so often doing it again, in his Socinianism unmasked, I see he cannot write without it. And so I leave it to the judgment of the reader, whether he can be allowed to know other men's thoughts, who, on many occasions, seems not well to know his own. The

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railing in the remainder of this chapter I shall pass by, as I have done a great deal of the same strain in his book: only to show how well he understands or represents my sense, I shall set down my words, as they are in the pages he quotes, and his inferences from them.

Vindication, p. 171.

I know not but it may be true that the anti-Trinitarians and Racovians understand those places as I do; but it is more than I know, that they do so. I took not my sense of those texts from those writers, but from the Scripture itself, giving light to its own meaning, by one place compared with another. What, in this way, appears to me its true meaning, I shall not decline, because I am told, that it is so understood by the Racovians, whom I never yet read; nor embrace the contrary, though the generality of divines I more converse with, should declare for it. If the sense wherein I understand those texts be a mistake, I shall be beholden to you, if you will set me right. But they are not popular authorities, or frightful names, whereby I judge of truth or falsehood.

Socinianism Unmasked, p. 108.

"The professed divines of England, you must know, are but a pitiful sort of folks with this great Racovian rabbi. He tells us plainly, that he is not mindful of what the generality of divines declare for, p. 171. He labours so concernedly to ingratiate himself with the mob, the multitude (which he so often talks of) that he has no regard to these. The generality of the rabble are more considerable with him than the generality of divines."

He tells me here of the generality of divines. If he had said of the church of England, I could have understood him: but he says, "The professed divines of England;" and there being several sorts of divines in England, who, I think, do not every where agree in their interpretations of Scripture; which of them is it I must have regard to, where they differ? If he cannot tell me that, he complains here of me for a fault, which he himself knows not how to mend.

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Vindication, p. 169.

The list of materials for his creed, (for the articles are not yet formed) Mr. Edwards closes, p. 111, with these words: "These are the matters of faith contained in the epistles; and they are essential and integral parts of the Gospel itself." What! just these, neither more nor less? If you are sure of it, pray let us have them speedily, for the reconciling of differences in the Christian church, which has been so cruelly torn about the articles of the Christian faith, to the great reproach of Christian charity, and scandal of our true religion.

Socinianism Unmasked, p. 109.

"This author, as demure and grave as he would sometimes seem to be, can scoff at the matters of faith contained in the apostles' epistles, p. 169."

Does the vindicator here "scoff at the matters of faith contained in the epistles?" or show the vain pretences of the unmasker; who undertakes to give us, out of the epistles, a collection of fundamentals, without being able to say, whether those he sets down be all or no?

Vindication, p. 176.

I hope you do not think, how contemptibly soever you speak of the venerable mob, as you are pleased to dignify them, p. 117, that the bulk of mankind, or, in your phrase, the rabble, are not concerned in religion; or ought not to understand it, in order to their salvation. I remember the Pharisees treated the common people with contempt; and said, "Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed in him? But this people, who know not the law, are cursed." But yet these, who, in the censure of the Pharisees, were cursed, were some of the poor, or, if you please to have it so, the mob, to whom the Gospel

Socinianism Unmasked, p. 110.

"To coax the mob, he profanely brings in that place of Scripture; Have any of the rulers believed in him?"

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was preached by our Saviour, as he tells John's disciples, Matth. xi. 5.

Where the profaneness of this is, I do not see; unless some unknown sacredness of the unmasker's person make it profaneness to show, that he, like the Pharisees of old, has a great contempt for the common people, *i. e.* the far greater part of mankind; as if they and their salvation were below the regard of this elevated rabbi. But this, of profaneness, may be well borne from him, since in the next words my mentioning another part of his carriage is no less than irreligion.

Vindication, p. 173.

He prefers what I say to him myself, to what is offered to him from the word of God, and makes me this compliment, that I begin to mend about the close, *i. e.* when I leave off quoting of Scripture, and the dull work was done "of going through the history of the Evangelists and the Acts," which he computes, p. 105, to take up three quarters of my book.

Socinianism Unmasked, p. 110.

"Ridiculously and irreligiously he pretends," that I prefer what he saith to me to what is offered to me from the word of God, p. 173.

The matter of fact is as I relate it, and so is beyond pretence; and for this I refer the reader to the 105th and 114th pages of his Thoughts concerning the Causes of Atheism. But had I mistaken, I know not how he could have called it irreligiously. Make the worst of it that can be, how comes it to be irreligious? What is there divine in an unmasker, that one cannot pretend, (true or false) that he prefers what I say, to what is offered him from the word of God, without doing it irreligiously? Does the very assuming the power to define articles, and determine who are, and who are not Christians, by a creed not yet made, erect an unmasker presently into God's throne, and bestow on him the title of *Dominus Deusque noster*, whereby offences against him come to be irreligious acts? I have

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misrepresented his meaning; let it be so: Where is the irreligion of it? Thus it is: the power of making a religion for others, (and those that make creeds do that) being once got into any one's fancy, must at last make all oppositions to those creeds and creed-makers irreligion. Thus we see, in process of time, it did in the church of Rome: but it was in length of time, and by gentle degrees. The unmasker, it seems, cannot stay, is in haste, and at one jump leaps into the chair. He has given us yet but a piece of his creed, and yet that is enough to set him above the state of human mistakes or frailties; and to mention any such thing in him is to do irreligiously.

"We may further see," says the unmasker, p. 110, "how counterfeit the vindicator's gravity is, whilst he condemns frothy and light discourses," p. 173, Vindic. And "yet, in many pages together, most irreverently treats a great part of the apostolical writings, and throws aside the main articles of religion, as unnecessary." Answer, In my Vindic. p. 170, you may remember these words: "I require you to publish to the world those passages, which show my contempt of the epistles." Why do you not (especially having been so called upon to do it) set down those words, wherein "I most irreverently treat a great part of the apostolical writings?" At least, why do you not quote those many pages wherein I do it? This looks a little suspiciously, that you cannot: and the more because you have, in this very page, not been sparing to quote places which you thought to your purpose. I must take leave, therefore, (if it may be done without irreligion) to assure the reader, that this is another of your many mistakes in matters of fact, for which you have not so much as the excuse of inadvertency: for, as he sees, you have been minded of it before. But an unmasker, say what you will to him, will be an unmasker still.

He closes what he has to say to me, in his Socinianism unmasked, as if he were in the pulpit, with an use of exhortation. The false insinuations it is filled with make the conclusion of a piece with the introduction. As he sets out, so he ends, and therein shows wherein

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he places his strength. A custom of making bold with truth is so seldom curable in a grown man, and the unmasker shows so little sense of shame, where it is charged upon him, beyond a possibility of clearing himself, that nobody is to trouble themselves any farther about that part of his established character. Letting therefore that alone to nature and custom, two sure guides, I shall only entreat him, to prevent his taking railing for argument, (which I fear he too often does) that upon his entrance, every where, upon any new argument, he would set it down in syllogism; and when he has done that (that I may know what is to be answered) let him then give vent, as he pleases, to his noble vein of wit and oratory.

The lifting a man's self up in his own opinion, has had the credit, in former ages, to be thought the lowest degradation that human nature could well sink itself to. Hence, says the wise man, Prov. xxvi. 5, "Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit:" hereby showing, that self-conceitedness is a degree beneath ordinary folly. And therefore he there provides a fence against it, to keep even fools from sinking yet lower, by falling into it. Whether what was not so in Solomon's days be now, by length of time, in ours, grown into a mark of wisdom and parts, and an evidence of great performances, I shall not inquire. Mr. Edwards, who goes beyond all that ever I yet met with, in the commendation of his own, best knows why he so extols what he has done in this controversy. For fear the phrases he has not been sparing of, in his Socinianism unmasked, should not sufficiently trumpet out his worth, or might be forgotten; he, in a new piece entitled, the Socinian Creed, proclaims again his mighty deeds, and the victory he has established to himself by them, in these words: "But he and his friends (the one-article men) seem to have made satisfaction, by their profound silence lately, whereby they acknowledge to the world, that they have nothing to say in reply to what I laid to their charge, and fully proved against them," &c. Socinian Creed, p. 168. This fresh testimony of no ordinary conceit, which Mr.

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Edwards hath, of the excellency and strength of his reasoning, in his Socinianism unmasked, I leave with him and his friends, to be considered of at their leisure: and, if they think I have misapplied the term of conceitedness, to so wise, understanding, and every way accomplished a disputant, (if we may believe himself) I will teach them a way how he, or any body else, may fully convince me of it. There remains on his score, marked in this reply of mine, several propositions to be proved by him. If he can find but arguments to prove them, that will bear the setting down in form, and will so publish them, I will allow myself to be mistaken. Nay, which is more, if he, or any body, in the 112 pages of his Socinianism unmasked, can find but ten arguments that will bear the test of syllogism, the true touchstone of right arguing; I will grant, that that treatise deserves all those commendations he has bestowed upon it, though it be made up more of his own panegyric, than a confutation of me.

In his Socinian Creed, (for a creed-maker he will be; and whether he has been as lucky for the Socinians as for the orthodox, I know not) p. 120, he begins with me, and that with the same conquering hand and skill which can never fail of victory, if a man has but wit enough to know what proposition he is able to confute, and then make that his adversary's tenet. But the repetitions of his old song concerning one article, the epistles, &c. which occur here again, I shall only set down, that none of these excellent things may be lost, whereby this acute and unanswerable writer has so well deserved his own commendations: viz. "That I say, there is but one single article of the Christian truth necessary to be believed and assented to by us," p. 121. "That I slight the Christian principles, curtail the articles of our faith, and ravish Christianity itself from him," p. 123. "And that I turn the epistles of the apostles into waste paper," p. 127.

These and the like slanders I have already given an answer to, in my reply to his former book. Only one new one here I cannot pass over in silence, because of the remarkable profaneness which seems to me to be in

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it; which, I think, deserves public notice. In my Reasonableness of Christianity, I have laid together those passages of our Saviour's life which seemed to me most eminently to show his wisdom, in that conduct of himself, with that reserve and caution which was necessary to preserve him, and carry him through the appointed time of his ministry. Some have thought I had herein done considerable service to the Christian religion, by removing those objections which some were apt to make from our Saviour's carriage, not rightly understood. This creed-maker tells me, p. 127, "That I make our Saviour a coward:" a word not to be applied to the Saviour of the world by a pious or discreet Christian, upon any pretence, without great necessity, and sure grounds! If he had set down my words, and quoted the page, (which was the least could have been done to excuse such a phrase) we should then have seen which of us two this impious and irreligious epithet, given to the holy Jesus, has for its author. In the mean time, I leave it with him, to be accounted for, by his piety, to those, who by his example shall be encouraged to entertain so vile a thought, or use so profane an expression of the Captain of our salvation, who freely gave himself up to death for us.

He also says in the same page, 127, "That I every where strike at systems, the design of which is to establish one of my own, or to foster scepticism by beating down all others."

For clear reason, or good sense, I do not think our creed-maker ever had his fellow. In the immediately preceding words of the same sentence he charges me with "a great antipathy against systems;" and, before he comes to the end of it, finds out my design to be the "establishing one of my own." So that this, "my antipathy against systems" makes me in love with one. "My design," he says, "is to establish a system of my own, or to foster scepticism, in beating down all others." Let my book, if he pleases, be my system of Christianity. Now is it in me any more fostering scepticism to say my system is true, and others not, than it is in the creed-maker to say so of all other systems

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but his own? For I hope he does not allow any system of Christianity to be true, that differs from his, any more than I do.

But I have spoken against all systems. Answ. And always shall, so far as they are set up by particular men, or parties, as the just measure of every man's faith; wherein every thing that is contained, is required and imposed to be believed to make a man a Christian: such an opinion and use of systems I shall always be against, until the creed-maker shall tell me, amongst the variety of them, which alone is to be received and rested in, in the absence of his creed; which is not yet finished, and, I fear, will not, as long as I live. That every man should receive from others, or make to himself such a system of Christianity, as he found most conformable to the word of God, according to the best of his understanding, is what I never spoke against: but think it every one's duty to labour for, and to take all opportunities, as long as he lives, by studying the Scriptures every day, to perfect.

But this, I fear, will not go easily down with our author; for then he cannot be a creed-maker for others: a thing he shows himself very forward to be; how able to perform it, we shall see when his creed is made. In the mean time, talking loudly and at random, about fundamentals, without knowing what is so, may stand him in some stead.

This being all that is new, which I think myself concerned in, in this Socinian Creed, I pass on to his Postscript. In the first page whereof, I find these words: "I found that the manager of the Reasonableness of Christianity had prevailed with a gentleman to make a sermon upon my refutation of that treatise, and the vindication of it." Such a piece of impertinency as this might have been borne from a fair adversary: but the sample Mr. Edwards has given of himself, in his Socinianism unmasked, persuades me this ought to be bound up with what he says of me in his introduction to that book, in these words: "Among others, they thought and made choice of a gentleman, who, they knew, would be extraordinary useful to them. And

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he, it is probable, was as forward to be made use of by them, and presently accepted of the office that was assigned him:" and more there to the same purpose. All which I know to be utterly false.

It is a pity that one who relies so entirely upon it, should have no better an invention. The Socinians set the author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. on work to write that book; by which discovery the world being (as Mr. Edwards says) let into the project, that book is confounded, baffled, blown off, and by this skilful artifice there is an end of it. Mr. Bold preaches and publishes a sermon without this irrefragable gentleman's good leave and liking. What now must be done to discredit it, and keep it from being read? Why, Mr. Bold too was set on work, by "the manager of the Reasonableness of Christianity," &c. In your whole storehouse of stratagems, you that are so great a conqueror, have you but this one way to destroy a book, which you set your mightiness against, but to tell the world it was a job of journeywork for somebody you do not like? Some other would have done better in this new case, had your happy invention been ready with it: for you are not so bashful or reserved, but that you may be allowed to be as great a wit as he who professed himself "ready at any time to say a good or a new thing, if he could but think of it." But in good earnest, sir, if one should ask you, Do you think no books contain truth in them, which were undertaken by the procuration of a bookseller? I desire you to be a little tender in the point, not knowing how far it may reach. Ay, but such booksellers live not at the lower end of Paternoster-row, but in Paul's Churchyard, and are the managers of other-guise books, than the Reasonableness of Christianity. And therefore you very rightly subjoin, "Indeed, it was a great masterpiece of procuration, and we cannot but think that man must speak truth, and defend it very impartially and substantially, who is thus brought on to undertake the cause." And so Mr. Bold's sermon is found to have neither truth nor sense in it, because it was printed by a bookseller at the lower end of Paternoster-

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row; for that, I dare say, is all you know of the matter. But that is hint enough for a happy diviner, to be sure of the rest, and with confidence to report that for certain matter of fact, which had never any being but in the forecasting side of his politic brain.

But whatever were the reasons that moved Mr. B—— to preach that sermon, of which I know nothing; this am sure, it shows only the weakness and malice (I will not say, and ill-breeding, for that concerns not one of Mr. Edwards's pitch) of any one who excepts against it, to take notice of any thing more than what the author has published. Therein alone consists the error, if there be any; and that alone those meddle with, who write for the sake of truth. But poor cavillers have other purposes, and therefore must use other shifts, and make a bustle about something besides the argument, to prejudice and beguile unwary readers.

The only exception the creed-maker makes to Mr. Bold's sermon, is the contradiction he imputes to him, in saying: "That there is but one point or article necessary to be believed for the making a man a Christian: and that there are many points besides this, which Jesus Christ hath taught and revealed, which every sincere Christian is indispensably obliged to endeavour to understand:" and "that there are particular points and articles, which being known to be revealed by Christ, Christians must indispensably assent to." And where, now, is there any thing like a contradiction in this? Let it be granted, for example, that the creed-maker's set of articles, (let their number be what they will, when he has found them all out) are necessary to be believed, for the making a man a Christian. Is there any contradiction in it to say, there are many points besides these, which Jesus Christ hath taught and revealed, which every sincere Christian is indispensably obliged to endeavour to understand? If this be not so, it is but for any one to be perfect in Mr. Edwards's creed, and then he may lay by the Bible, and from thenceforth he is absolutely dispensed with from studying or understanding any thing more of the Scripture.

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But Mr. Edwards's supremacy is not yet so far established, that he will dare to say, that Christians are not obliged to endeavour to understand any other points revealed in the Scripture, but what are contained in his creed. He cannot yet well discard all the rest of the Scripture, because he has yet need of it for the completing of his creed, which is like to secure the Bible to us for some time yet. For I will be answerable for it, he will not be quickly able to resolve what texts of the Scripture do, and what do not, contain points necessary to be believed. So that I am apt to imagine, that the creed-maker, upon second thoughts, will allow that saying, that there is but one, or there are but twelve, or there are but as many as he shall set down, (when he has resolved which they shall be) necessary to the making a man a Christian; and the saying, there are other points besides, contained in the Scripture, which every sincere Christian is indispensably obliged to endeavour to understand, and must believe, when he knows them to be revealed by Jesus Christ, are two propositions that may consist together without a contradiction.

Every Christian is to partake of that bread, and that cup, which is the communion of the body and blood of Christ. And is not every sincere Christian indispensably obliged to endeavour to understand these words of our Saviour's institution, "This is my body, and this is my blood?" And if, upon his serious endeavour to do it, he understands them in a literal sense, that Christ meant, that that was really his body and blood, and nothing else; must he not necessarily believe that the bread and wine, in the Lord's supper, is changed really into his body and blood, though he doth not know how? Or, if having his mind set otherwise, he understands the bread and wine to be really the body and blood of Christ, without ceasing to be the true bread and wine: or else, if he understands them, that the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed given and received, in the sacrament, in a spiritual manner: or, lastly, if he understands our Saviour to mean, by those words, the bread and wine to be only a

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representation of his body and blood; in which way soever of these four, a Christian understands these words of our Saviour to be meant by him, is he not obliged in that sense to believe them to be true, and assent to them? Or can he be a Christian, and understand these words to be meant by our Saviour in one sense, and deny his assent to them as true, in that sense? Would not this be to deny our Saviour's veracity, and consequently his being the Messiah, sent from God? And yet this is put upon a Christian, where he understands the Scripture in one sense, and is required to believe it in another. From all which it is evident, that to say there is one, or any number of articles necessary to be known and believed to make a man a Christian, and that there are others contained in the Scripture, which a man is obliged to endeavour to understand, and obliged also to assent to, as he does understand them, is no contradiction.

To believe Jesus to be the Messiah, and to take him to be his Lord and King, let us suppose to be that only which is necessary to make a man a Christian: may it not yet be necessary for him, being a Christian, to study the doctrine and law of this his Lord and King, and believe that all that he delivered is true? Is there any contradiction in holding of this? But this creed-maker, to make sure work, and not to fail of a contradiction in Mr. Bold's words, mis-repeats them, p. 241, and quite contrary, both to what they are in the sermon, and what they are, as set down by the creed-maker himself, in the immediately preceding page. Mr. Bold says, "There are other points that Jesus Christ hath taught and revealed, which every sincere Christian is indispensably obliged to understand; and which being known to be revealed by Christ, he must indispensably assent to." From which the creed-maker argues thus, p. 240,: "Now if there be other points, and particular articles, and those many, which a sincere Christian is obliged, and that necessarily and indispensably, to understand, believe, and assent to; then this writer hath, in effect, yielded to that proposition I maintained, viz. that the belief of one article is not sufficient to

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make a man a Christian; and consequently he runs counter to the proposition he had laid down."

Is there no difference, I beseech you, between being "indispensably obliged to endeavour to understand, and being indispensably obliged to understand any point?" It is the first of these Mr. Bold says, and it is the latter of these you argue from, and so conclude nothing against him: nor can you to your purpose. For until Mr. Bold says (which he is far from saying) that every sincere Christian is necessarily and indispensably obliged to understand all those texts of Scripture, from whence you should have drawn your necessary articles, (when you have perfected your creed) in the same sense that you do; you can conclude nothing against what he had said, concerning that one article, or any thing that looks like running counter to it. For it may be enough to constitute a man a Christian, and one of Christ's subjects, to take Jesus to be the Messiah, his appointed King, and yet, without a contradiction, so that it may be his indispensable duty, as a subject of that kingdom, to endeavour to understand all the dictates of his sovereign, and to assent to the truth of them, as far as he understands them.

But that which the good creed-maker aims at, without which all his necessary articles fall, is, that it should be granted him, that every sincere Christian was necessarily and indispensably obliged to understand all those parts of divine revelation, from whence he pretends to draw his articles, in their true meaning, *i. e.* just as he does. But his infallibility is not yet so established, but that there will need some proof of that proposition. And when he has proved, that every sincere Christian is necessarily and indispensably obliged to understand those texts in their true meaning; and that his interpretation of them is that true meaning; I shall then ask him, Whether "every sincere Christian is not as necessarily and indispensably obliged" to understand other texts of Scripture in their true meaning, though they have no place in his system?

For example, to make use of the instance abovementioned, is not every sincere Christian necessarily

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and indispensably obliged to endeavour to understand these words of our Saviour, "This is my body, and this is my blood," that he may know what he receives in the sacrament? Does he cease to be a Christian, who happens not to understand them just as the creed-maker does? Or may not the old gentleman at Rome (who has somewhat the ancienter title to infallibility) make transubstantiation a fundamental article necessary to be believed there, as well as the creed-maker here make his sense of any disputed text of Scripture a fundamental article necessary to be believed?

Let us suppose Mr. Bold had said, that instead of one point, the right knowledge of the creed-maker's one hundred points (when he has resolved on them) doth constitute and make a person a Christian; yet there are many other points Jesus Christ hath taught and revealed, which every sincere Christian is indispensably obliged to endeavour to understand, and to make a due use of; for this, I think, the creed-maker will not deny. From whence, in the creed-maker's words, I will thus argue: "Now if there be other points, and particular articles, and those many, which a sincere Christian is obliged, and that necessarily and indispensably, to understand, and believe, and assent to; then this writer doth, in effect, yield to that proposition which I maintained, viz. That the belief of those one hundred articles is not sufficient to make a man a Christian:" for this is that which I maintain, that upon this ground the belief of the articles, which he has set down in his list, are not sufficient to make a man a Christian; and that upon Mr. Bold's reason, which the creed-maker insists on against one article, viz. because there are many other points Jesus Christ hath taught and revealed, which every sincere Christian is as necessarily and indispensably obliged to endeavour to understand, and make a due use of.

But this creed-maker is cautious, beyond any of his predecessors. He will not be so caught by his own argument; and therefore is very shy to give you the precise articles that every sincere Christian is necessarily and indispensably obliged to understand and give his assent

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to. Something he is sure there is, that he is indispensably obliged to understand and assent to, to make him a Christian; but what that is he cannot yet tell. So that whether he be a Christian or no, he does not know; and what other people will think of him, from his treating of the serious things of Christianity in so trifling and scandalous a way, must be left to them.

In the next paragraph, p. 242, the creed-maker tells us, Mr. Bold goes on to confute himself, in saying, "A true Christian must assent unto this, that Christ Jesus is God." But this is just such another confutation of himself as the before-mentioned, *i. e.* as much as a falsehood, substituted by another man, can be a confutation of a man's self, who has spoken truth all of a piece. For the creed-maker, according to his sure way of baffling his opponents, so as to leave them nothing to answer, hath here, as he did before, changed Mr. Bold's words, which in the 35th page, quoted by the creed-maker, stand thus: "When a true Christian understands, that Christ Jesus hath taught that he is God, he must assent unto it:" which is true, and conformable to what he had said before, that every sincere Christian must endeavour to understand the points taught and revealed by Jesus Christ; which being known to be revealed by him, he must assent unto.

The like piece of honesty the creed-maker shows in the next paragraph, p. 243, where he charges Mr. Bold with saying, "That a true Christian is as much obliged to believe, that the Holy Spirit is God, as to believe that Jesus is the Christ," p. 40. In which place, Mr. Bold's words are: "When a true Christian understands, that Christ Jesus hath given this account of the Holy Spirit, viz. that he is God; he is as much obliged to believe it, as he is to believe, that Jesus is the Christ:" which is an incontestable truth, but such an one as the creed-maker himself saw would do him no service; and therefore he mangles it, and leaves out half to serve his turn. But he that should give a testimony in the slight affairs of men, and their temporal concerns, before a court of judicature, as the creed-maker does here, and almost every where, in

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the great affairs of religion, and the everlasting concern of souls, before all mankind, would lose his ears for it. What, therefore, this worthy gentleman alleges out of Mr. Bold, as a contradiction to himself, being only the creed-maker's contradiction to truth, and clear matter of fact, needs no other answer.

The rest of what he calls Reflections on Mr. Bold's Sermon being nothing but either rude and misbecoming language of him; or pitiful childish application to him, to change his persuasion at the creed-maker's entreaty, and give up the truth he hath owned, in courtesy to this doughty combatant; shows the ability of the man. Leave off begging the question, and superciliously presuming that you are in the right; and, instead of that, show by argument: and I dare answer for Mr. Bold, you will have him, and I promise you, with him, one convert more. But arguing is not, it seems, this notable disputant's way. If boasting of himself, and contemning of others, false quotations, and feigned matters of fact, which the reader neither can know, nor is the question concerned in, if he did know, will not do; there is an end of him: he has shown his excellency in scurrilous declamation; and there you have the whole of this unanswerable writer. And for this, I appeal to his own writings in this controversy, if any judicious reader can have the patience to look them over.

In the beginning of his Reflections on Mr. Bold's Sermon, he confidently tells the world, "that he had found that the manager of the Reasonableness of Christianity had prevailed on Mr. Bold to preach a sermon upon his reflections," &c. And adds, "And we cannot but think, that that man must speak the truth, and defend it very impartially and substantially, who is thus brought on to undertake the cause." And at the latter end he addresses himself to Mr. Bold, as one that is drawn off, to be an under journeyman-worker in Socinianism. In his gracious allowance, "Mr. Bold is, seemingly, a man of some relish of religion and piety," p. 244. He is forced also to own him to be a man of sobriety and temper,

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p. 245. A very good rise to give him out to the world, in the very next words, as a man of a profligate conscience: for so he must be, who can be drawn off to preach or write for Socinianism, when he thinks it a most dangerous error; who can "dissemble with himself, and choke his inward persuasions," (as the creed-maker insinuates that Mr. Bold does, in the same address to him, p. 248) and write contrary to his light. Had the creed-maker had reason to think in earnest, that Mr. Bold was going off to Socinianism, he might have reasoned with him fairly, as with a man running into a dangerous error; or if he had certainly known, that he was by any by-ends prevailed on to undertake a cause contrary to his conscience, he might have some reason to tell the world, as he does, p. 239, "That we cannot think he should speak truth, who is thus brought to undertake the cause." If he does not certainly know, that "Mr. Bold was *thus* brought to undertake the cause," he could not have shown a more villanous and unchristian mind, than in publishing such a character of a minister of the Gospel, and a worthy man, upon no other grounds, but because it might be subservient to his ends. He is engaged in a controversy, that by argument he cannot maintain; nor knew any other way, from the beginning, to attack the book he pretends to write against, but by crying out Socinianism; a name he knows in great disgrace with all other sects of Christians, and therefore sufficient to deter all those who approve and condemn books by hearsay, without examining their truth themselves, from perusing a treatise, to which he could affix that imputation. Mr. Bold's name, (who is publicly known to be no Socinian) he foresees, will wipe off that false imputation, with a great many of those who are led by names more than things. This seems exceedingly to trouble him, and he labours, might and main, to get Mr. Bold to quit a book as Socinian, which Mr. Bold knows is not Socinian, because he has read and considered it.

But though our creed-maker be mightily concerned, that Mr. B—d should not appear in the defence of it; yet this concern cannot raise him one jot above that

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honesty, skill, and good breeding, which appear towards others. He manages this matter with Mr. B—d as he has done the rest of the controversy; just in the same strain of invention, civility, wit, and good sense. He tells him, besides what I have above set down, "That he is drawn off to debase himself, and the post, *i. e.* the ministry he is in," p. 245. "That he hath said very ill things, to the lessening and impairing, yea, to the defaming of that knowledge and belief of our Saviour, and of the articles of Christianity, which are necessarily required of us," p. 245. "That the devout and pious," (whereby he means himself: for *one* and *none* is his own beloved wit and argument) "observing that Mr. Bold is come to the necessity of but *one* article of faith, they expect that he may in time hold that *none* is necessary," p. 248. "That if he writes again in the same strain, he will write rather like a Turkish spy than a Christian preacher; and that he is a backslider, and sailing to Racovia with a side wind:" than which, what can there be more scurrilous, or more malicious? And yet at the same time that he outrages him thus, beyond not only what Christian charity, but common civility, would allow in an ingenuous adversary, he makes some awkward attempts to soothe him with some ill-timed commendations; and would have his undervaluing Mr. Bold's animadversions pass for a compliment to him; because he, for that reason, pretends not to believe so crude and shallow a thing (as he is pleased to call it) to be his. A notable contrivance to gain the greater liberty of railing at him under another name, when Mr. B—d's, it seems, is too well known to serve him so well to that purpose. Besides, it is of good use to fill up three or four pages of his Reflections; a great convenience to a writer, who knows all the ways of baffling his opponents, but argument; and who always makes a great deal of stir about matters foreign to his subject; which, whether they are granted or denied, make nothing at all to the truth of the question on either side. For what is it to the shallowness or depth of the Animadversions, who writ them? Or to the truth or falsehood of Mr.

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B—d's Defence of the Reasonableness of Christianity, whether a layman, or a churchman, a Socinian, or one of the church of England, answered the creed-maker as well as he? Yet this is urged as a matter of great weight; but yet, in reality, it amounts to no more but this, that a man of any denomination, who wishes well to the peace of Christianity, and has observed the horrible effects the Christian religion has felt from the impositions of men, in matters of faith, may have reason to defend a book, wherein the simplicity of the Gospel, and the doctrine proposed by our Saviour and his apostles, for the conversion of unbelievers, is made out, though there be not one word of the distinguishing tenets of his sect in it. But that all those, who, under any name, are for imposing their own orthodoxy, as necessary to be believed, and persecuting those who dissent from them, should be all against it, is not perhaps very strange.

One thing more I must observe of the creed-maker on this occasion: in his Socinian Creed, chap. vi. the author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. and his book, must be judged of, by the characters and writings of those who entertain or commend his notions. "A professed Unitarian has defended it;" therefore he is a Socinian. The author of A Letter to the Deists speaks well of it; therefore he is a Deist. Another, as an abettor of the Reasonableness of Christianity, he mentions, p. 125, whose letters I have never seen; and his opinions too are, I suppose, set down there as belonging to me. Whatever is bad in the tenets or writings of these men infects me. But the mischief is, Mr. Bold's orthodoxy will do me no good: but, because he has defended my book against Mr. Edwards, all my faults are become his, and he has a mighty load of accusations laid upon him. Thus contrary causes serve so good a natured, so charitable, and candid a writer as the creed-maker, to the same purpose of censure and railing. But I shall desire him to figure to himself the loveliness of that creature, which turns every thing into venom. What others are, or hold, who have expressed favourable thoughts of my

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book, I think myself not concerned in. What opinions others have published, make those in my book neither true nor false; and he that, for the sake of truth, would confute the errors in it, should show their falsehood and weakness, as they are: but they who write for other ends than truth, are always busy with other matters; and where they can do nothing by reason and argument, hope to prevail with some by borrowed prejudices and party.

Taking therefore the Animadversions, as well as the sermon, to be his, whose name they bear, I shall leave to Mr. B—d himself to take what notice he thinks fit of the little sense, as well as great impudence, of putting his name in print to what is not his, or taking it away from what he hath set it to, whether it belongs to his bookseller or answerer. Only I cannot pass by the palpable falsifying of Mr. B—d's words, in the beginning of his epistle to the reader, without mention. Mr. B—d's words are: "whereby I came to be furnished with a truer and more just notion of the main design of that *treatise*." And the good creed-maker sets them down thus: "The main design of *my own treatise or sermon*:" a sure way for such a champion for truth to secure to himself the laurel or the whetstone!

This irresistible disputant, (who silences all that come in his way, so that those that would cannot answer him) to make good the mighty encomiums he has given himself, ought (one would think) to clear all as he goes, and leave nothing by the way unanswered, for fear he should fall into the number of those poor baffled wretches, whom he with so much scorn reproaches, that they would answer, if they could.

Mr. B—d begins his Animadversions with this remark, that our creed-maker had said, That "I give it over and over again in these formal words, viz. That nothing is required to be believed by any Christian man but this, 'That Jesus is the Messiah.'" To which Mr. B—d replies, p. 4, in these words: "Though I have read over the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. with some attention, I have not observed those

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formal words in any part of that book, nor any words that are capable of that construction; provided they be considered with the relation they have to, and the manifest dependence they have on, what goes before, or what follows after them."

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

Whether it was because he would not, or because he could not, let the reader judge. But this is down upon his score already, and it is expected he should answer to it, or else confess that he cannot. And that there may be a fair decision of this dispute, I expect the same usage from him, that he should set down any proposition of his I have not answered to, and call on me for an answer, if I can; and if I cannot, I promise him to own it in print.

The creed-maker had said, "That it is most evident to any thinking and considerate person, that I purposely omit the epistolary writings of the apostles because they are fraught with other fundamental doctrines, besides that which I mention."

To this Mr. B—d answers, p. 5, That if by "fundamental articles, Mr. Edwards means here, all the propositions delivered in the epistles, concerning just those particular heads, he [Mr. Edwards] had here mentioned; it lies upon him to prove, that Jesus Christ hath made it necessary, that every person must have an explicit knowledge and belief of all those, before he can be a Christian."

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

And yet, without an answer to it, all his talk about fundamentals, and those which he pretended to set down in that place, under the name of fundamentals, will signify nothing in the present case; wherein, by fundamentals, were meant such propositions which every person must necessarily have an explicit knowledge and belief of, before he can be a Christian.

Mr. B—d, in the same place, p. 7, very truly and pertinently adds, "That it did not pertain to [my] undertaking to inquire what doctrines, either in the Epistles, or the Evangelists and the Acts, were of greatest moment to be understood by them who are

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Christians; but what was necessary to be known and believed to a person's being a Christian. For there are many important doctrines both in the Gospels, and in the Acts, besides this, 'That Jesus is the Messiah.' But how many soever the doctrines be, which are taught in the epistles, if there be no doctrine besides this, 'That Jesus is the Messiah,' taught there as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian; all the doctrines taught there will not make any thing against what this author has asserted, nor against the method he hath observed: especially, considering we have an account, in the Acts of the Apostles, of what those persons, by whom the epistles were writ, did teach, as necessary to be believed to people's being Christians."

This, and what Mr. B—d subjoins, "That it was not my design to give an abstract of any of the inspired books," is so true, and has so clear reason in it, that any, but this writer, would have thought himself concerned to have answered something to it.

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

It not being, it seems, a creed-maker's business to convince men's understanding by reason; but to impose on their belief by authority; or, where that is wanting, by falsehood and bawling. And to such Mr. Bold observes well, p. 8, "That if I had given the like account of the epistles, that would have been as little satisfactory as what I have done already, to those who are resolved not to distinguish 'betwixt what is necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, and those articles which are to be believed by those who are Christians,' as they can attain to know that Christ hath taught them."

This distinction the creed-maker, nowhere, that I remember, takes any notice of; unless it be p. 255, where he has something relating hereunto, which we shall consider, when we come to that place. I shall now go on to show what Mr. Bold has said, to which he answers not.

Mr. Bold farther tells him, p. 10, that if he will prove any thing in opposition to the Reasonableness of

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Christianity, &c. it must be this: "That Jesus Christ and his apostles have taught, that the belief of some one article, or certain number of articles distinct from this, 'That Jesus is the Messiah,' either as exclusive of, or in conjunction with, the belief of this article, doth constitute and make a person a Christian: but that the belief of this, that Jesus is the Messiah alone, doth not make a man a Christian."

But to this Mr. Edwards *irrefragably answers nothing.*

Mr. Bold also, p. 10, charges him with his falsely accusing me in these words: "he pretends to contend for one single article, with the exclusion of all the rest, for this reason; because all men ought to understand their religion." And again, where he says, I am at this, viz. "That we must not have any point of doctrine in our religion, that the mob doth not, at the very first naming of it, perfectly understand and agree to;" Mr. Bold has quoted my express words to the contrary.

But to this this unanswerable gentleman *answers nothing.*

But if he be such a mighty disputant, that nothing can stand in his way; I shall expect his direct answer to it among those other propositions which I have set down to his score, and I require him to prove, if he can.

The creed-maker spends above four pages of his Reflections, in a great stir who is the author of those Animadversions he is reflecting on. To which I tell him, it matters not to a lover of truth, or a confuter of errors, who was the author; but what they contain. He who makes such a deal of do about that which is nothing to the question, shows he has but little mind to the argument; that his hopes are more in the recommendation of names, and prejudice of parties, than in the strength of his reasons, and the goodness of his cause. A lover of truth follows that, whoever be for or against it; and can suffer himself to pass by no argument of his adversary, without taking notice of it, either in allowing its force, or giving it a fair answer. Were the creed-maker capable of giving such an evidence as this of his

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love of truth, he would not have passed over the twenty first pages of Mr. Bold's Animadversions in silence. The falsehoods that are therein charged upon him would have required an answer of him, if he could have given any; and I tell him, he must give an answer, or confess the falsehoods.

In his 255th page, he comes to take notice of these words of Mr. Bold, in the 21st page of his Animadversions, viz. "That a convert to Christianity, or a Christian, must necessarily believe as many articles as he shall attain to know that Christ Jesus hath taught." "Which, says the creed-maker, wholly invalidates what he had said before, in these words," viz. "That Jesus Christ and his apostles did not teach any thing as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, but only this one proposition, That Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah." The reason he gives to show that the former of these propositions (in Mr. Bold) invalidates the latter, and that the animadverter contradicts himself, stands thus: "For, says he, if a Christian must give assent to all the articles taught by our Saviour in the Gospel, and that necessarily; then all those propositions reckoned up in my late discourse, being taught by Christ, or his apostles, are necessary to be believed." Ans. And what, I beseech you, becomes of the rest of the propositions taught by Christ, or his apostles, which you have not reckoned up in your late discourse? Are not they necessary to be believed, "if a Christian must give an assent to *all* the articles taught by our Saviour and his apostles?"

Sir, if you will argue right from that antecedent, it must stand thus: "If a Christian must give an assent to *all* the articles taught by our Saviour and his apostles, and that necessarily;" then all the propositions in the New Testament, taught by Christ, or his apostles, are necessary to be believed. This consequence I grant to be true, and necessarily to follow from that antecedent, and pray make your best of it: but withal remember, that it puts an utter end to your select number of fundamentals, and makes all the truths de-

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livered in the New Testament necessary to be explicitly believed by every Christian.

But, sir, I must take notice to you, that if it be uncertain whether he that writ the Animadversions be the same person that preached the sermon, yet it is very visible that it is the very same person that reflects on both; because he here again uses the same trick, in answering in the Animadversions the same thing that had been said in the sermon, viz. by pretending to argue from words as Mr. Bold's, when Mr. Bold has said no such thing. The proposition you argue from here is this: "If a Christian must give his assent to all the articles taught by our Saviour, and that necessarily." But Mr. Bold says no such thing. His words, as set down by yourself, are: "A Christian must necessarily" "believe as many articles as he shall attain to know that Christ Jesus hath taught." And is there no difference between "*all* that Christ Jesus hath taught, and *as many* as any one shall attain to know that Christ Jesus hath taught?" There is so great a difference between these two, that one can scarce think even such a creed-maker could mistake it. For one of them admits all those to be Christians, who, taking Jesus for the Messiah, their Lord and King, sincerely apply themselves to understand and obey his doctrine and law, and to believe all that they understand to be taught by him: the other shuts out, if not all mankind, yet nine hundred ninety-nine of a thousand, of those who profess themselves Christians, from being really so. For he speaks within compass, who says there is not one of a thousand, if there be any one man at all, who explicitly knows and believes all that our Saviour and his apostles taught, *i. e.* all that is delivered in the New Testament, in the true sense that it is there intended. For if giving assent to it, in any sense, will serve the turn, our creed-maker can have no exception against Socinians, Papists, Lutherans, or any other, who, acknowledging the Scripture to be the word of God, do yet oppose his system.

But the creed-maker goes on, p. 255, and endeavours

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to prove that what is necessary to be believed by every Christian is necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, in these words : " But he will say, the belief of those propositions makes not a man a Christian. Then, I say, they are not necessary and indispensable; for what is absolutely necessary in Christianity, is absolutely requisite to make a man a Christian."

Ignorance, or something worse, makes our creed-maker always speak doubtfully or obscurely, whenever he pretends to argue; for here " absolutely necessary in Christianity," either signifies nothing, but absolutely necessary to make a man a Christian; and then it is proving the same proposition by the same proposition; or else has a very obscure and doubtful signification. For if I ask him, Whether it be absolutely necessary in Christianity to obey every one of our Saviour's commands, what will he answer me? If he answers, No; I ask him, Which of our Saviour's commands is it not, in Christianity, absolutely necessary to obey? If he answers, Yes; then I tell him, by this rule, there are no Christians; because there is no one that does in all things obey all our Saviour's commands, and therein fails to perform what is absolutely necessary in Christianity, and so, by his rule, is no Christian. If he answers, Sincere endeavour to obey is all that is absolutely necessary; I reply, And so sincere endeavour to understand is all that is absolutely necessary: neither perfect obedience, nor perfect understanding, is absolutely necessary in Christianity.

But his proposition, being put in terms clear, and not loose and fallacious, should stand thus, viz. " What is absolutely necessary to every Christian, is absolutely requisite to make a man a Christian." But then I deny that he can infer from Mr. Bold's words, that those propositions (*i. e.* which he has set down as fundamental, or necessary to be believed) are absolutely necessary to be believed by every Christian. For that indispensable necessity Mr. Bold speaks of is not absolute, but conditional. His words are, " A Christian must believe as many articles as he shall attain to know that Jesus Christ hath taught." So that he

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places the indispensable necessity of believing upon the condition of attaining to know that Christ taught so. An endeavour to know what Jesus Christ taught, Mr. B—d says truly, is absolutely necessary to every one who is a Christian; and to believe what he has attained to know that Jesus Christ taught, that also, he says, is absolutely necessary to every Christian. But all this granted (as true it is), it still remains (and eternally will remain) to be proved from this (which is all that Mr. Bold says), that something else is absolutely required to make a man a Christian, besides the unfeigned taking Jesus to be the Messiah, his King, and Lord; and accordingly, a sincere resolution to obey and believe all that he commanded and taught.

The gaoler, Acts xvi. 30, in answer to his question, "What he should do to be saved?" was answered, "That he should believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." And the text says, that the gaoler "took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway." Now, I will ask our creed-maker, whether St. Paul, in speaking to him the word of the Lord, proposed and explained to him all those propositions and fundamental heads of doctrine, which our creed-maker has set down as necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian? Let it be considered the gaoler was a heathen, and one that seems to have no more sense of religion or humanity than those of that calling use to have: for he had let them alone under the pain of their stripes without any remedy, or so much as the ease of washing them, from the day before, until after his conversion; which was not until after midnight. And can any one think, that between his asking what he should do to be saved, and his being baptized, which, the text says, was the same hour, and straightway; there was time enough for St. Paul and Silas to explain to him all the creed-maker's articles, and make such a man as that, and all his house, understand the creed-maker's whole system; especially, since we hear nothing of it in the conversion of these, or any others who were brought into the faith, in the whole history of the preaching of our Saviour and

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the apostles? Now let me ask the creed-maker, whether the gaoler was not a Christian when he was baptized; and whether, if he had then immediately died, he had not been saved, without the belief of any one article more than what Paul and Silas had then taught him? Whence it follows, that what was then proposed to him to be believed (which appears to be nothing, but that Jesus was the Messiah), was all that was absolutely necessary to be believed to make him a Christian; though this hinders not, but that afterwards it might be necessary for him, indispensably necessary, to believe other articles, when he attained to the knowledge that Christ had taught them. And the reason of it is plain: because the knowing that Christ hath taught any thing, and the not receiving it for true, (which is believing it) is inconsistent with the believing him to be the Messiah, sent from God to enlighten and save the world. Every word of divine revelation is absolutely and indispensably necessary to be believed by every Christian, as soon as he comes to know it to be taught by our Saviour or his apostles, or to be of divine revelation. But yet this is far enough from making it absolutely necessary to every Christian, to know every text in the Scripture, much less to understand every text in the Scripture; and least of all, to understand it as the creed-maker is pleased to put his sense upon it.

This the good creed-maker either will not or cannot understand; but gives us a list of articles culled out of the Scripture by his own authority, and tells us, those are absolutely necessary to be believed by every one, to make him a Christian. For what is of absolute necessity in Christianity, as those, he says, are, he tells us, is absolutely requisite to make a man a Christian. But when he is asked, Whether these are all the articles of absolute necessity to be believed to make a man a Christian? this worthy divine, that takes upon himself to be a successor of the apostles, cannot tell. And yet, having taken upon himself also to be a creed-maker, he must suffer himself to be called upon for it again and again, until he tells us what is of absolute necessity to be believed to make a man a Christian, or confess that he cannot.

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In the mean time, I take the liberty to say, that every proposition delivered in the New Testament by our Saviour, or his apostles, and so received by any Christian as of divine revelation, is of as absolute necessity to be assented to by him, in the sense he understands it to be taught by them, as any one of those propositions enumerated by the creed-maker: and if he thinks otherwise, I shall desire him to prove it. The reason whereof is this, that in divine revelation, the ground of faith being the only authority of the proposer: where that is the same, there is no difference in the obligation or measure of believing. Whatever the Messiah, that came from God, taught, is equally to be believed by every one who receives him as the Messiah, as soon as he understands what it was he taught. There is no such thing as garbling his doctrine, and making one part of it more necessary to be believed than another, when it is understood. His saying is, and must be, of unquestionable authority to all that receive him as their heavenly King; and carries with it an equal obligation of assent to all that he says as true. But since nobody can explicitly assent to any proposition of our Saviour's as true, but in the sense he understands our Saviour to have spoken it in; the same authority of the Messiah, his King, obliges every one absolutely and indispensably to believe every part of the New Testament in that sense he understands it; for else he rejects the authority of the deliverer, if he refuses his assent to it in that sense which he is persuaded it was delivered in. But the taking him for the Messiah, his King and Lord, laying upon every one who is his subject an obligation to endeavour to know his will in all things; every true Christian is under an absolute and indispensable necessity, by being his subject, to study the Scriptures with an unprejudiced mind, according to that measure of time, opportunity, and helps which he has; that in these sacred writings he may find what his Lord and Master hath by himself, or by the mouths of his apostles, required of him, either to be believed or done.

The creed-maker, in the following page, 256, hath these words: "It is worth the reader's observing, that notwithstanding I had in twelve pages together

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(viz. from the eighth to the twentieth) proved, that several propositions are necessary to be believed by us, in order to our being Christians; yet this sham-animadverter attends not to any one of the particulars which I had mentioned, nor offers any thing against them; but only, in a lumping way, dooms them all in those magisterial words: "I do not see any proof he produces," p. 21. "This is his wonderful way of confuting me, by pretending that he cannot see any proof in what I allege: and all the world must be led by his eyes."

Answ. "It is worth the reader's observing," that the creed-maker does not reply to what Mr. Bold has said to him, as we have already seen, and shall see more as we go on; and therefore he has little reason to complain of him, for not having answered enough. Mr. Bold did well to leave that which was an insignificant lump, so as it was, together; for it is no wonderful thing not to see any proof, where there is no proof. There is, indeed, in those pages the creed-maker mentions, much confidence, much assertion, a great many questions asked, and a great deal said after his fashion; but for a proof, I deny there is any one. And if what I have said in another place already does not convince him of it, I challenge him, with all his eyes, and those of the world to boot, to find out, in those twelve renowned pages, one proof. Let him set down the proposition, and his proof of its being absolutely and indispensably necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian; and I too will join with him in his testimonial of himself, that he is irrefragable. But I must tell him beforehand, talking a great deal loosely will not do it.

Mr. Bold and I say we cannot see any proof in those twelve pages: the way to make us see, or to convince the world that we are blind, is to single out one proof out of that wood of words there, which you seem to take for arguments, and set it down in a syllogism, which is the fair trial of a proof or no proof. You have, indeed, a syllogism in the 23d page; but that is not in those twelve pages you mention. Besides, I

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have showed, in another place, what that proves; to which I refer you.

In answer to the creed-maker's question, about his other fundamentals found in the epistles: "Why did the apostles write these doctrines? Was it not, that those they writ to might give their assent to them?" Mr. Bold, p. 22, replies: "But then it may be asked again, Were not those persons Christians to whom the apostles preached these doctrines, and whom they required to assent to them? Yes, verily. And if so, What was it that made them Christians before their assent to these doctrines was required? If it were any thing besides their believing Jesus to be the Messiah, it ought to be instanced in, and made out.

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

The next thing in controversy between Mr. Bold and the creed-maker, (for I follow Mr. B—d's order) is about a matter of fact, viz. Whether the creed-maker has proved, "that Jesus Christ and his apostles have taught, that no man can be a Christian, or shall be saved, unless he has an explicit knowledge of all those things which have an immediate respect to the occasion, author, way, means, and issue of our salvation, and which are necessary for the knowing the true nature and design of it?" This, Mr. Bold, p. 24, tells him, "he has not done." To this the creed-maker replies, p. 258,

"And yet the reader may satisfy himself, that this is the very thing that I had been proving just before, and, indeed, all along in the foregoing chapter." Answ. There have been those who have been seven years proving a thing, which at last they could not do; and I give you seven years to prove this proposition, which you should there have proved; and I must add to your score here, viz.

LII. That Jesus Christ, or his apostles, have taught, that no man can be a Christian, or can be saved, unless he hath an explicit knowledge of all these things which have an immediate respect to the occasion, author, way, means, and issue of our salva-

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tion, and which are necessary for our knowing the true nature and design of it.

Nor must the poor excuse of saying, It was not necessary "to add any farther medium, and proceed to another syllogism, because you had secured that proposition before," go for payment. If you had secured it, as you say, it had been quite as easy, and much for your credit, to have produced the proof whereby you had secured it, than to say you had done it; and thereupon to reproach Mr. Bold with heedlessness; and to tell the world, that "he cares not what he saith." The rule of fair dispute is, indispensably to prove, where any thing is denied. To evade this, is shuffling: and he that, instead of it, answers with ill language, in my country, is called a foul-mouthed wrangler.

To the creed-maker's exception to my demand, about the actual belief of all his fundamentals in his new creed, Mr. Bold asks, p. 24, "Whether a man can believe particular propositions, and not actually believe them?"

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

Mr. Bold, p. 25, farther acknowledges the creed-maker's fundamental propositions to "be in the Bible; and that they are for this purpose there, that they might be believed:" and so, he saith, "is every other proposition which is taught in our Bibles." But asks, How will it thence follow, that no man can be a Christian until he particularly know, and actually assent to, every proposition in our Bibles?"

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

From p. 26 to 30 Mr. Bold shows, that the creed-maker's reply concerning my not gathering of fundamentals out of the epistles is nothing to the purpose; and this he demonstratively proves.

And to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

The creed-maker had falsely said, That "I bring no tidings of an evangelical faith:" and thence very readily and charitably infers: "Which gives us to understand, that he verily believes there is no such Chri-

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stian faith." To this Mr. Bold thus softly replies, p. 31: "I think Mr. Edwards is much mistaken, both in his assertion and inference:" and to show that he could not so infer, adds: "If the author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. had not brought any tidings of such a faith, I think it could not be thence justly inferred that he verily believes there is no such Christian faith: because his inquiry and search was not concerning Christian faith, considered subjectively, but objectively; what the articles be, which must be believed to make a man a Christian; and not with what sort of faith these articles are to be believed."

To this the creed-maker answers indeed; but it is something as much worse than nothing, as falsehood is worse than silence. His words are, p. 258, "It may be questioned, from what he [the animadverter] hath the confidence to say, p. 31, viz. There is no inquiry in the Reasonableness of Christianity, concerning faith subjectively considered, but only objectively," &c. And thus having set down Mr. B—d's words otherwise than they are; for Mr. Bold does not say, there is no inquiry, *i. e.* no mention, (for so the creed-maker explains inquiries here. For to convince Mr. Bold that there is an inquiry, *i. e.* mention, of subjective faith, he alleges, that subjective faith is spoken of in the 296th and 297th pages of my book.) But Mr. Bold says not, that faith, considered subjectively, is not spoken of any where in the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. but "that the author's inquiry and search (*i. e.* the author's search, or design of his search) was not concerning Christian faith considered subjectively." And thus the creed-maker, imposing on his reader, by perverting Mr. Bold's sense, from what was the intention of my inquiry and search, to what I had said in it, he goes on, after his scurrilous fashion, to insult, in these words which follow: "I say, it may be guessed from this what a liberty this writer takes to assert what he pleases." Answ. "To assert what one pleases," without truth and without certainty, is the worst character can be given a writer; and with falsehood to charge it on another, is no mean

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slander and injury to a man's neighbour. And yet to these shameful arts must he be driven, who finding his strength of managing a cause to lie only in fiction and falsehood, has no other but the dull Billingsgate way of covering it, by endeavouring to divert the reader's observation and censure from himself by a confident repeated imputation of that to his adversary, which he himself is so frequent in the commission of. And of this the instances I have given are a sufficient proof; in which I have been at the pains to set down the words on both sides, and the pages where they are to be found, for the reader's full satisfaction.

The cause in debate between us is of great weight, and concerns every Christian. That any evidence in the proposal, or defence of it, can be sufficient to conquer all men's prejudices, is vanity to imagine. But this, I think, I may justly demand of every reader, that since there are great and visible falsehoods on one side or the other (for the accusations of this kind are positive and frequent) he would examine on which side they are: and upon that I will venture the cause in any reader's judgment, who will but be at the pains of turning to the pages marked out to him; and as for him that will not do that, I care not much what he says.

The creed-maker's following words, p. 258, have the natural mark of their author. They are these: "How can this animadverter come off with peremptorily declaring, that subjective faith is not inquired into in the treatise of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. when in another place, p. 35 and 36, he avers, That Christian faith and Christianity, considered subjectively, are the same?" Answ. In which words there are two manifest untruths: the one is, "That Mr. Bold peremptorily declares, that subjective faith is not inquired into, *i. e.* spoken of, in the Reasonableness of Christianity," &c. Whereas Mr. Bold says in that place, p. 31, "If he [*i. e.* the author] had not said one word concerning faith subjectively considered." The creed-maker's other untruth is his saying, "That the animadverter avers, p. 35, 36, that Christian faith and Christianity, considered subjectively, are the same." Whereas it is evi-

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dent, that Mr. Bold, arguing against these words of the creed-maker ("The belief of Jesus being the Messiah was one of the first and leading acts of Christian faith"), speaks in that place of an act of faith, as these words of his demonstrate: "Now, I apprehend that Christian faith and Christianity, considered subjectively, (and an *act* of Christian faith, I think, cannot be understood in any other sense) are the very same." I must therefore desire him to set down the words wherein the animadverter peremptorily declares,

LIII. That subjective faith is not inquired into, or spoken of, in the treatise of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c.

And next, to produce the words wherein the animadverter avers,

LIV. That Christian faith and Christianity, considered subjectively, are the same.

To the creed-maker's saying, "That the author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. brings us no tidings of evangelical faith belonging to Christianity," Mr. Bold replies: That I have done it in all those pages where I speak of taking and accepting Jesus to be our King and Ruler; and particularly he sets down my words out of pages 119, &c.

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

The creed-maker says, p. 59 of his Socinianism unmasked, that the author of the Reasonableness of Christianity "tells men again and again, that a Christian man, or member of Christ, needs not know or believe any more than that one individual point." To which Mr. Bold thus replies, p. 33: "If any man will show me those words in any part of the Reasonableness, &c. I shall suspect I was not awake all the time I was reading that book: and I am as certain as one awake can be that there are several passages in that book directly contrary to these words. And there are some expressions in the Vindication of the Reasonableness, &c. one

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would think, if Mr. Edwards had observed them, they would have prevented that mistake."

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

Mr. Bold, p. 34, takes notice, that the creed-maker had not put the query, or objection, right, which, he says, "Some, and not without some show of ground, may be apt to start: and therefore Mr. Bold puts the query right, viz. "Why did Jesus Christ, and his apostles, require assent to, and belief of, this one article alone, viz. That Jesus is the Messiah, to constitute and make a man a Christian, or true member of Christ (as it is abundantly evident they did, from the Reasonableness of Christianity), if the belief of more articles is absolutely necessary to make and constitute a man a Christian?"

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

And therefore I put the objection, or query, to him again, in Mr. Bold's words, and expect an answer to it, viz.

> LV. Why did Jesus Christ, and his apostles, require assent to, and belief of, this one article alone, viz. That Jesus is the Messiah, to make a man a Christian (as it is abundantly evident they did, from all their preaching, recorded throughout all the whole history of the Evangelists and the Acts), if the belief of more articles be absolutely necessary to make a man a Christian?

The creed-maker having made believing Jesus to be the Messiah only one of the first and leading acts of Christian faith; Mr. Bold, p. 35, rightly tells him, That "Christian faith must be the belief of something or other: and if it be the belief of any thing besides this, that Jesus is the Christ, or Messiah, that other thing should be specified; and it should be made appear, that the belief that Jesus is the Messiah, without the belief of that other proposition, is not Christian faith."

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

Mr. B—d, in the four following pages, 36—39, has excellently explained the difference between that faith which constitutes a man a Christian, and that faith

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whereby one that is a Christian believes the doctrines taught by our Saviour, and the ground of that difference: and therein has fully overturned this proposition, "That believing Jesus to be the Messiah is but a step, or the first step, to Christianity."

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

To the creed-maker's supposing that other matters of faith were proposed with this, that Jesus is the Messiah; Mr. Bold replies, That this should be proved, viz. that other articles were proposed, as requisite to be believed to make men Christians. And, p. 40, he gives a reason why he is of another mind, viz. "Because there is nothing but this recorded, which was insisted on for that purpose."

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

Mr. Bold, p. 42, shows that Rom. x. 9, which the creed-maker brought against it, confirms the assertion of the author of the Reasonableness, &c. concerning the faith that makes a man a Christian.

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

The creed-maker says, p. 78, "This is the main answer to the objection (or query above proposed), viz. That Christianity was erected by degrees." This Mr. Bold, p. 43, proves to be nothing to the purpose, by this reason, viz. "Because what makes one man a Christian, or ever did make any man a Christian, will at any time, to the end of the world, make another man a Christian:" and asks, "Will not that make a Christian now which made the apostles themselves Christians?"

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

In answer to his sixth chapter, Mr. Bold, p. 45, tells him, "It was not my business to discourse of the Trinity, or any other particular doctrines, proposed to be believed by them who are Christians; and that it is no fair and just ground to accuse a man with rejecting the doctrines of the Trinity, and that Jesus is God, because he does not interpret some particular texts to the same purpose others do."

But to this Mr. Edwards *answers not.*

Indeed, he takes notice of these words of Mr. Bold, in this paragraph, viz. "Hence Mr. Edwards takes oc-

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casion to write many pages about these terms [viz. Messiah and Son of God]; but I do not perceive that he pretends to offer any proof that these were not synonymous terms amongst the Jews at that time, which is the point he should have proved, if he designed to invalidate what this author says about that matter." To this the creed-maker replies, p. 257, "The animadverter doth not so much as offer one syllable to disprove what I delivered, and closely urged on that head." Answ. What need any answer to disprove, where there is no proof brought, that reaches the proposition in question? If there had been any such proof, the producing of it, in short, had been a more convincing argument to the reader than so much bragging of what has been done. For here are more words spent (for I have not set them all down) than would have served to have expressed the proof of this proposition, viz. that the terms above-mentioned were not synonymous amongst the Jews, if there had been any proof of it. But having already examined what the creed-maker brags he has closely urged, I shall say no more of it here.

To the creed-maker's making me a Socinian, in his eighth chapter, for not naming Christ's satisfaction among the advantages and benefits of Christ's coming into the world; Mr. Bold replies, "1. That it is no proof, because I promised not to name every one of them. And the mention of some is no denial of others." 2. He replies, That "satisfaction is not so strictly to be termed an advantage, as the effects and fruits of it are; and that the doctrine of satisfaction instructs us in the way how Christ did, by divine appointment, obtain those advantages for us." And this was an answer that deserved some reply from the creed-maker.

But to this he answers not.

Mr. Bold says right, that this is a doctrine that is of mighty importance for a Christian to be well acquainted with. And I will add to it, that it is very hard for a Christian, who reads the Scripture with attention and an unprejudiced mind, to deny the satisfaction of Christ: but it being a term not used by the Holy Ghost in the

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Scripture, and very variously explained by those that do use it, and very much stumbled at by those I was there speaking to, who were such, as I there say, "Who will not take a blessing, unless they be instructed what need they had of it, and why it was bestowed upon them;" I left it, with the other disputed doctrines of Christianity, to be looked into (to see what it was Christ had taught concerning it) by those who were Christians, and believed Jesus to be the Saviour promised, and sent from God. And to those who yet doubted that he was so, and made this objection, "What need was there of a Saviour?" I thought it most reasonable to offer such particulars only as were agreed on by all Christians, and were capable of no dispute, but must be acknowledged by every body to be needful. This, though the words above-quoted out of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. p. 129, show to be my design; yet the creed-maker plainly gives me the lie, and tells me it was not my design. "All the world are faithless, false, treacherous, hypocritical strainers upon their reason and conscience, dissemblers, journeymen, mercenary hirelings, except Mr. Edwards:" I mean, all the world that opposes him. And must not one think he is mightily beholden to the excellency and readiness of his own nature, who is no sooner engaged in controversy, but he immediately finds out in his adversaries these arts of equivocation, lying, and effrontery, in managing of it? Reason and learning, and acquired improvements, might else have let him gone on with others, in the dull and ordinary way of fair arguing; wherein, possibly, he might have done no great feats. Must not a rich and fertile soil within, and a prompt genius, wherein a man may readily spy the propensities of base and corrupt nature, be acknowledged to be an excellent qualification for a disputant, to help him to the quick discovery and laying open of the faults of his opponents; which a mind otherwise disposed would not so much as suspect? But Mr. Bold, without this, could not have been so soon found out to be a journeyman, a dissembler, an hired mercenary, and stored with all those good qualities, wherein he hath his full share

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with me. But why would he then venture upon Mr. Edwards, who is so very quick-sighted in these matters, and knows so well what villanous man is capable of?

I should not here, in this my Vindication, have given the reader so much of Mr. Bold's reasoning, which, though clear and strong, yet has more beauty and force as it stands in the whole piece in his book; nor should I have so often repeated this remark upon each passage, viz. "To this Mr. Edwards answers not;" had it not been the shortest and properest comment could be made on that triumphant paragraph of his, which begins in the 128th page of his Socinian creed; wherein, among a great deal of no small strutting, are these words: "By their profound silence they acknowledge they have nothing to reply." He that desires to see more of the same noble strain, may have recourse to that eminent place. Besides, it was fit the reader should have this one taste more of the creed-maker's genius, who, passing by in silence all these clear and apposite replies of Mr. Bold, loudly complains of him, p. 259, "That where he [Mr. Bold] finds something that he dares not object against, he shifts it off." And again, p. 260, "That he does not make any offer at reason; there is not the least shadow of an argument—As if he were only hired to say something against me [the creed-maker], though not at all to the purpose: and truly, any man may discern a *mercenary* stroke all along;" with a great deal more to the same purpose. For such language as this, mixed with scurrility, neither fit to be spoken by, nor of, a minister of the gospel, make up the remainder of his postscript. But to prevent this for the future, I demand of him, that if in either of his treatises there be any thing against what I have said in my Reasonableness of Christianity, which he thinks not fully answered, he will set down the proposition in direct words, and note the page of his book where it is to be found: and I promise him to answer it. For as for his railing, and other stuff besides the matter, I shall hereafter no more trouble myself to take notice of it. And so much for Mr. Edwards.

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THERE is another gentleman, and of another sort of make, parts, and breeding, who, (as it seems, ashamed of Mr. Edwards's way of handling controversies in religion) has had something to say of my Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. and so has made it necessary for me to say a word to him, before I let those papers go out of my hand. It is the author of the Occasional Paper, numb. 1. The second, third, and fourth pages of that paper gave me great hopes to meet with a man who would examine all the mistakes which came abroad in print, with that temper and indifferency, that might set an exact pattern for controversy to those who would approve themselves to be sincere contenders for truth and knowledge, and nothing else, in the disputes they engaged in. Making him allowance for the mistakes that self-indulgence is apt to impose upon human frailty, I am apt to believe he thought his performance had been such; but I crave leave to observe, that good and candid men are often misled, from a fair unbiassed pursuit of truth, by an over-great zeal for something, that they, upon wrong grounds, take to be so; and that it is not so easy to be a fair and unprejudiced champion for truth as some, who profess it, think it to be. To acquaint him with the occasion of this remark, I must desire him to read and consider his nineteenth page; and then to tell me,

1. Whether he knows, that the doctrine proposed in the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. was borrowed, as he says, from Hobbes's Leviathan? For I tell him, I borrowed it only from the writers of the four Gospels and the Acts; and did not know those words, he quoted out of the Leviathan, were there, or any thing like them. Nor do I know yet, any farther than as I believe them to be there, from his quotation.

2. Whether affirming, as he does positively, this, which he could not know to be true, and is in itself perfectly false, were meant to increase or lessen the credit of the author of the Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. in the opinion of the world? or is consonant with his own rule, p. 3, "of putting candid constructions on

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what adversaries say?" or with what follows, in these words? "The more divine the cause is, still the greater should be the caution. The very discoursing about Almighty God, or our holy religion, should compose our passions, and inspire us with candour and love. It is very indecent to handle such subjects in a manner that betrays rancour and spite. These are fiends that ought to vanish, and should never mix, either with a search after truth or the defence of religion."

3. Whether the propositions which he has, out of my book, inserted into his nineteenth page, and says, "are consonant to the words of the Leviathan," were those of all my book which were likeliest to give the reader a true and fair notion of the doctrine contained in it? If they were not, I must desire him to remember and beware of his fiends. Not but that he will find those propositions there to be true. But that neither he nor others may mistake my book, this is that, in short, which it says:

1. That there is a faith that makes men Christians.

2. That this faith is the believing "Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah."

3. That the believing Jesus to be the Messiah includes in it a receiving him for our Lord and King, promised and sent from God: and so lays upon all his subjects an absolute and indispensable necessity of assenting to all that they can attain the knowledge that he taught; and of a sincere obedience to all that he commanded.

This, whether it be the doctrine of the Leviathan, I know not. This appears to me out of the New Testament, from whence (as I told him in the preface) I took it to be the doctrine of our Saviour and his apostles; and I would not willingly be mistaken in it. If therefore there be any other faith besides this absolutely requisite to make a man a Christian, I shall here again desire this gentleman to inform me what it is; *i. e.* to set down all those propositions which are so indispensably to be believed, (for it is of simple believing I perceive the controversy runs) that no man can be a believer, *i. e.* a Christian, without an actual knowledge

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of, and an explicit assent to, them. If he shall do this with that candour and fairness he declares to be necessary in such matters, I shall own myself obliged to him: for I am in earnest, and I would not be mistaken in it.

If he shall decline it, I, and the world too, must conclude, that upon a review of my doctrine he is convinced of the truth of it, and is satisfied that I am in the right. For it is impossible to think that a man of that fairness and candour, which he solemnly prefaces his discourse with, should continue to condemn the account I have given of the faith which I am persuaded makes a Christian; and yet he himself will not tell me (when I earnestly demand it of him, as desirous to be rid of my error, if it be one) what is that more which is absolutely required to be believed by every one before he can be a believer, *i. e.* what is indispensably necessary to be known, and explicitly believed, to make a man a Christian.

Another thing which I must desire this author to examine, by those his own rules, is, what he says of me, p. 30, where he makes me to have a prejudice against the ministry of the Gospel, and their office, from what I have said in my Reasonableness, &c. p. 135, 136, concerning the priests of the world, in our Saviour's time: which he calls bitter reflections.

If he will tell me what is so bitter, in any one of those passages which he has set down, that is not true, or ought not to be said there, and give me the reason why he is offended at it; I promise him to make what reparation he shall think fit to the memory of those priests, whom he, with so much good-nature, patronises, near seventeen hundred years after they have been out of the world; and is so tenderly concerned for their reputation, that he excepts against that, as said against them, which was not. For one of the three places he sets down was not spoken of priests. But his making my mentioning the faults of the priests of old, in our Saviour's time, to be an "exposing the office of the ministers of the Gospel now, and a villifying those who are employed in it," I must desire him to examine, by his own rules of love and candour, and to tell

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me, "Whether I have not reason, here again, to mind him of his *fiends*, and to advise him to beware of them?" And to show him why I think I have, I crave leave to ask him these questions:

1. Whether I do not all along plainly, and in express words, speak of the priests of the world preceding, and in our Saviour's time? Nor can my argument bear any other sense.

2. Whether all I have said of them be not true?

3. Whether the representing truly the carriage of the Jewish, and more especially of the heathen priests, in our Saviour's time, as my argument required, can expose the office of the ministers of the Gospel now? Or ought to have such an interpretation put upon it?

4. Whether what he says of the "air and language I use, reaching farther," carry any thing else in it but a declaration, that he thinks some men's carriage now hath some affinity with what I have truly said of the priests of the world before Christianity; and that therefore the faults of those should have been let alone, or touched more gently, for fear some should think these now concerned in it?

5. Whether, in truth, this be not to accuse them, with a design to draw the envy of it on me? Whether out of good-will to them, or to me, or both, let him look. This I am sure, I have spoke of none but the priests before Christianity, both Jewish and heathen. And for those of the Jews, what our Saviour has pronounced of them justifies my reflections from being bitter; and that the idolatrous heathen priests were better than they, I believe our author will not say: and if he were preaching against them, as opposing the ministers of the Gospel, I suppose he will give as ill a character of them. But if any one extends my words farther than to those they were spoke of, I ask whether that agrees with his rules of love and candour?

I shall impatiently expect from this author of the Occasional Paper an answer to these questions; and hope to find them such as becomes that temper, and love of truth, which he professes. I long to meet with a man, who, laying aside party, and interest, and prejudice, ap-

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pears in controversy so as to make good the character of a champion of truth for truth's sake; a character not so hard to be known whom it belongs to, as to be deserved. Whoever is truly such an one, his opposition to me will be an obligation. For he that proposes to himself the convincing me of an error, only for truth's sake, cannot, I know, mix any rancour, or spite, or ill-will, with it. He will keep himself at a distance from those *fiends*, and be as ready to hear, as offer reason. And two so disposed can hardly miss truth between them in a fair inquiry after it; at least, they will not lose good-breeding, and especially charity; a virtue much more necessary than the attaining of the knowledge of obscure truths, that are not easy to be found; and probably, therefore, not necessary to be known.

The unbiassed design of the writer, purely to defend and propagate truth, seems to me to be that alone which legitimates controversies. I am sure it plainly distinguishes such from all others, in their success and usefulness. If a man, as a sincere friend to the person, and to the truth, labours to bring another out of error, there can be nothing more beautiful, nor more beneficial. If party, passion, or vanity direct his pen, and have a hand in the controversy; there can be nothing more unbecoming, more prejudicial, nor more odious. What thoughts I shall have of a man that shall, as a Christian, go about to inform me what is necessary to be believed to make a man a Christian, I have declared, in the preface to my Reasonableness of Christianity, &c. nor do I find myself yet altered. He that, in print, finds fault with my imperfect discovery of that, wherein the faith which makes a man a Christian consists, and will not tell me what more is required, will do well to satisfy the world what they ought to think of him.

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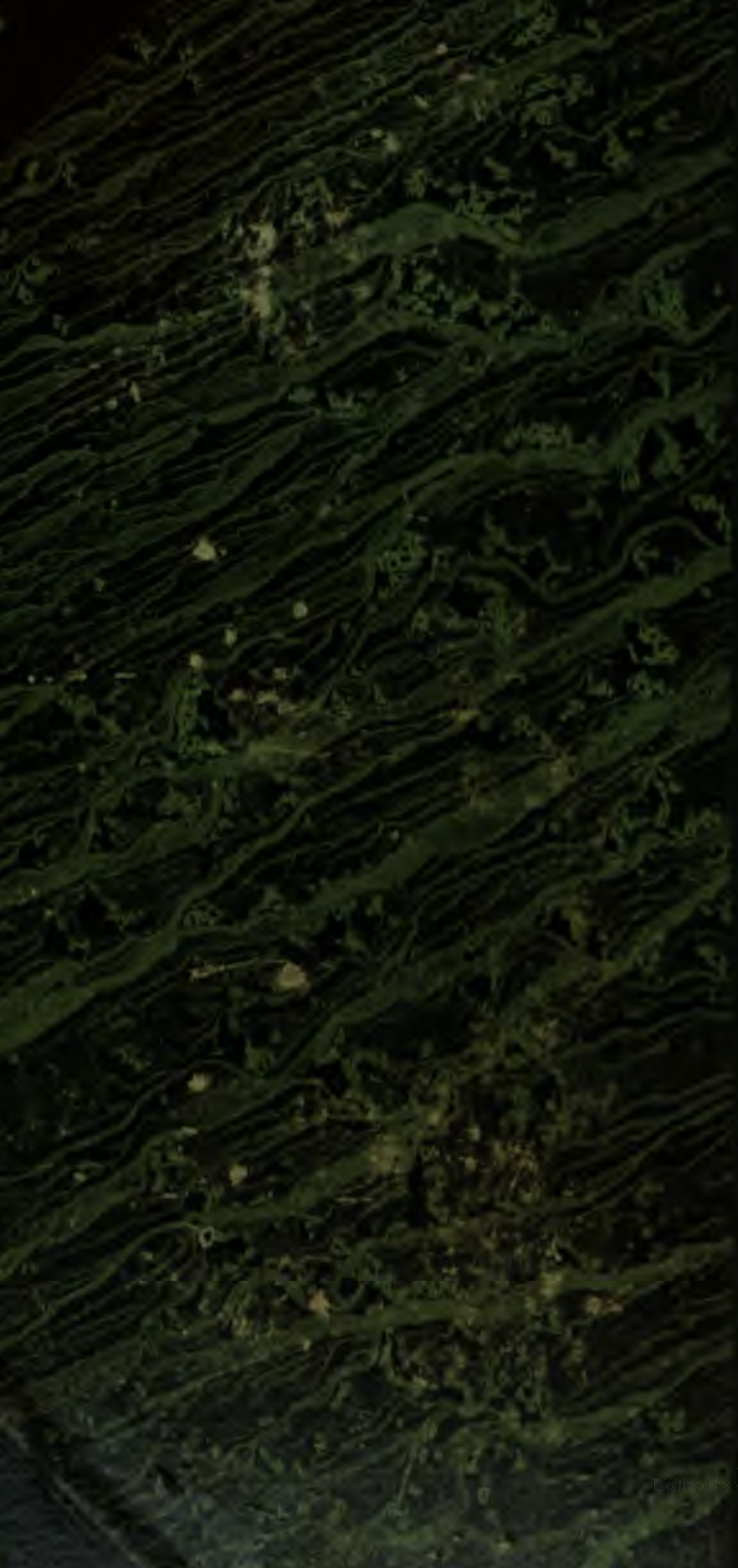
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